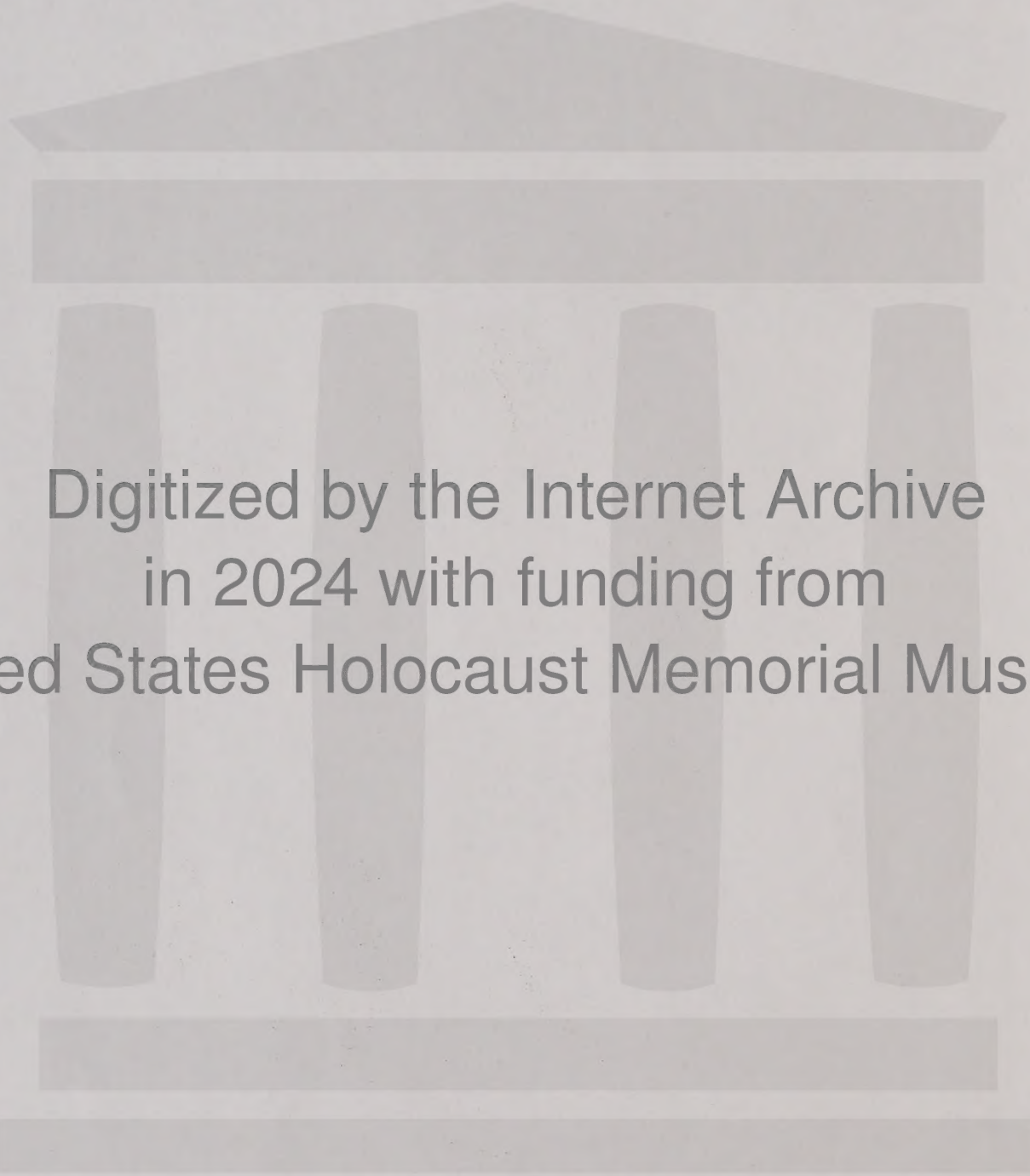




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" I R E M E M B E R "

Marianne Berel

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P R E F A C E

This book is a compilation of three books:

- I: "LETTERS TO MY MOTHER" a diary I maintained while in an internment camp in France during the first part of the war. (Gurs, B.P.)
- II: "THE FIRST TEN YEARS" describing my adjustment in New York.
- III: "THE SPLIT" which changed my life back to my parent's wishes: a college education with music as an important ingredient.

These books were written due to my acquaintance with THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE whose assistant director motivated me to write about the experience of my adjustment.

These books are incorporated into the Archives of THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE, and, together with other documents I donated, initiated a Marianne Berel collection.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

"You'll only love me when I am dead,"

my mother used to say -

But this was not so, since my constant urge to be in touch with her gave me strength and motivation to write her long letters in spite of long separations. Thus, when our correspondence was disconnected during the war while I was in Gurs, a concentration camp at the French Spanish border, I managed to buy a composition book which I used to give her a detailed account about the past months in which I felt too upset to write. However, to understand the mood and the condition of my life at the time I wrote in this composition book, it is essential to provide some background for the present reader.

In 1934, while I was still living with my parents in Breslau, Germany, the famous Wanda Landowska accepted me as one of her piano students. I therefore received the required exit visa to join my fiancé in Paris. Later, when my fiancé succeeded to transfer some money from his father's inheritance to be a partner in a new enterprise in Paris, we married. Thus, we lived as German Jewish refugees in a small furnished apartment next to the Sacré Coeur.

When we acquired our French carte d'identité (valid for three years) my husband suggested we return our passports to the German Consulate by stating that we no longer wished to be considered as German citizens. We both assumed that our French carte d'identité would be sufficient for all we needed.

Studying with Wanda Landowska was expensive, but my father supplied me with the necessary money until the Nazis changed their regulations which prevented him from further supporting me and I had to stop the lessons.

Having studied the piano since early childhood I was confronted with the problem of what to do with myself. In Paris aliens were not permitted to have

a job, but we could be a representative for someone. Thus, eventually a librarian I knew, introduced me to a man, who was braiding plastic strings into belts for the export trade. He was also a refugee, a lawyer who - to save his life, swam at night through the river Seine and lived illegally in Paris more or less protected by a girlfriend who had legal papers. He seemed pleased that I was willing to help him sell his belts and promised me a 15% commission. So I started to familiarize myself with an entirely new field. With the news of this choice my mother lamented: "...but Darling, the piano is the only thing you ever learned..."

True, but she did not seem to realize that my former life had come to a complete standstill. I knew I needed another start, no matter what or where. Psychologically I seem to live in a complete void, always hoping for a return to "normal."

Alone I roamed around Paris, took lessons from a Russian girl to learn French, modelled for different people ----- always looking for an opportunity to do something.

One day I met one of our neighbors while enjoying the sun on our rooftop. His name was Tommy, an Englishman, although he spoke a fluent German, had a car and was married to a woman living in London whose acquaintance I made when her Hungarian parents came to live in Paris.

At one time he showed me photos of himself as an actor and it was possible that he lived in Paris to make connections in this field.

The concept of the "Fifth Column" which is generally understood today, was at that time a completely unknown entity. Actually I did not believe that Tommy was involved in spying but I was tempted to think of him as a pimp for he was obviously living on his wife's money. While I thought that this was really not my business, yet I often felt disturbed about their relationship. It was an impression which later returned to haunt me while I was in serious trouble.

In 1939 ---- five years had passed and I now spoke a fluent French - even looked French - had abandoned playing the piano and I was now a representative of a designer, (his name was Joe) who made exclusive belts for the "Haute Couture."

Although I made very little money, it gave me the illusion of a better future. We became quite friendly and almost daily we had a pleasant lunch together.

In the Fall of 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland all newspapers carried the headlines encouraging everybody to leave Paris, who could afford it. When my husband volunteered for the French Army, he was refused and interned as an alien. Alone in all this excitement Tommy, my neighbor invited me to join him in his car to go to the seashore which I gladly accepted.

However, since nothing happened we got restless and also got short of money, so Tommy decided to go back to England and I returned to Paris which now had a ghostlike look. The windows of practically every house were crisscrossed with tape to protect them from breaking in case of an attack. Many stores were closed and the streets looked deserted.

Our apartment had been locked and everything we possessed confiscated. Perhaps my husband had failed to pay our rent, as had happened once before, or because we were aliens - I do not know.

But here I stood utterly alone in just a few summer clothes I had taken with me when we were urged to flee. With the little money I had left I took a room in a nearby hotel whose toilet was dark, dirty and swarming with vermin. When I looked myself in the mirror the next morning I hardly recognized myself. The permanent wave, which had been applied on my hair only recently had vanished and the hair was straight like a cow's tail. My face had aged and there was a strange expression which was never there before. Thinking that our friends were probably in a similar situation I went to look for them hoping that I would be able to live with one or the other. But I was wrong. Their situation was not nearly as desperate as mine. Moreover, although my father was released from the ill famed concentration camp of Buchenwald to go to England, he had been interned again at the Isle of Wight when Hitler invaded Poland. My mother lived with my sister in Oxford, whose husband had been mobilized. I was not even permitted to see my husband at his camp, without making a formal request which took a very long time to be granted.

Feeling completely isolated without him or family, with hardly any money left, locked out of our apartment I happen to pass by sheer coincidence the elegant bookstore where my sister's father in law was working. Since I had only met him once after my sister's wedding, I was not sure how he would receive me. However, I had nowhere to go and nothing to lose, so I entered the store.

Like a ~~ro~~bbi, with a long beard and dressed in rather conservative clothes, he spoke very fast in many languages, but in his intense hatred towards the Germans he refused to even utter a single word in that language. I was not afraid of him, but a bit awed. The minute he saw me he overwhelmed me with a flood of reproaches in English, the only one I understood was that he tried to call me "dozens of times." Since I did not come to see him, he found it perfectly "natural" to be in deepest misery. He then brought me to eat in a vegetarian restaurant and told me to get my things.

He lived with his second wife in the suburbs (St. Cloud) where, besides an apartment he had a single room in a different part of the building in which one of his sons used to live. It was here where he offered me to stay, thus saving me from the worst.

Now I had a place for which I did not have to worry to find money for rent, there was food and he supplied me with some money.

The next step was to get a release for our belongings, which the concierge together with the police had confiscated. My sister's father in law was so angry about it he would not even let me go with him, but took it upon himself to act. His wife claimed she had never seen him in such a state of excitement when the ordeal was over. All our things were then shipped to his bookstore, where I was to sort things out and take what I needed, but to my dismay much had been stolen.

Besides my clothes I took the typewriter which I used not only to write letters, but in particular to translate them. Since my husband was obliged to write his letters in French from the internment camp I established the communication between him and his mother who lived in South Africa. Moreover, to keep my husband informed about my family I also translated my own mother's letters from English into French.

Thinking the process amusing (if that is the word-) I spoke about this to our gossipy concierge, when I

should have kept my mouth shut. For the concierge had nothing better to do than go to the police with the tale that I must be a kind of spy, because I translated letters on a typewriter.

It did not take long and some detectives came to investigate my room. Soon after I received a notice to come to their police station where they handed me an order of expulsion, retained my carte d'identité and told me that if I wished to avoid going to jail (or in a concentration camp) I will have to leave France within three days. Without being informed as to why this procedure was taken I was entirely at a loss what to do. Leave France?----

To go where ???

Since my husband previously suggested to return our passports to the German Consulate I was now stripped of any legal document.

About a year ago the police in Paris had interviewed me about my neighbor Tommy and his wife's family so I assumed that my present dilemma was probably connected with them and I did not suspect my present

conciierge now. It was an ugly situation and even my sister's father in law appeared disconcerted. I had two days left.....

There was a certain Mr. B. at police headquarters in Paris whom I knew for many years and to whom I fled for help. He seemed to be in an influential position but neither he had any advice.

However, as it happened: someone had suggested to go to Versailles, where I went in my despair and noticed a huge building on which the classical words were prominently displayed of

EGALITE ** LIBERTE** FRATERNITE**

Seduced with these expressions I had the courage to enter but was ushered immediately from one to the other, for no one knew what to do with me. Finally I landed in an office where a man sat in a wheelchair at a desk, whom I obviously impressed with my freakish tale. He could not believe it. However, I spoke a fluent French and so I was able to document it all. He made me sit down while picking up the phone on which he talked with many people, asking them the same question: "What is she supposed to do?"

Finally I received the answer that I was to go to

Switzerland, but since I had no passport I will be retained at the frontier and then send back to Paris which would legalize my status.

The same evening I left, provided with a few quickly made sandwiches and some money of my sister's father in law. Both, he and his wife brought me to the railroad station to see me off. It was very exciting. It only took a few hours to be in Bellegarde the Swiss frontier town where I had to get out and show the paper with my expulsion order. Since I love Switzerland the idea that perhaps I could go there enchanted me - but it did not happen.

The French Commissaire, who interviewed me threw me into prison. Finished -

Finished??? It cannot be, the fellow said, they will let me go back on the next train...

But here I was, locked in a place with an open window. It was so cold that one could hardly smell the pail of urine standing in a corner. There was a kind of horse blanket on a wooden plank which was to serve for sitting as well as sleeping.

A few hours later a policeman came to ask me, if I had the money for lunch, which I refused since I assumed that my train to Paris will be due soon. He just laughed, which frightened me.

It could not be - and yet it was.

I was beginning to be nervous while eating all I had left, tried to read, but preferred to knit on something I had started.

It was December 1st and I thought back just a few years ago. December 1st... my first party at home. I wore a royal blue satin dress with my mother's heavy golden chain (later stolen) It was a memorable time and I thought of my father's often repeated statement, that life is a constant change, which filled me optimism.

It gets dark early in December and, in spite of frequent exercises I made to keep warm, I started to feel uncomfortable.

I had taken a bottle of aspirin with me and so I began swallowing one after the other while thinking that they may numb my senses and I would be able to sleep. I succeeded.

I don't know how long I lay there. Dressed in my mother's discarded seal coat on a dirty wooden plank at the Swiss frontier between an open window and a stinking pail of urine when the locked door suddenly opened and a tall young policeman appeared. Like lightning I woke up, jumped at him while embracing his waistline.

"Qu'est-ce-que tu fait ici?"(what are you doing here?)

Thereupon I emphatidally cried: "Je suis une in-déterminée...." (I am an undetermined)-

In 1939 this was a familiar expression for the French police, particularly at the frontiers. I was not the only one in that situation. Luckily he pitied me and let me sit in their heated office. Since I had some money one of the policeman fetched me a luscious dinner with the traditional bottle of wine, all of which I consumed under the staring eyes of various policemen on call for the night. About an hour later, they brought me to another office, where I found a different commissaire to interview me.

After listening to my story he formally apologized in the name of France for the treatment I had to endure. He was interested in music and that I had been a student of the famous Wanda Landowska.

But later he wanted to confront me again with other detectives which scared me. The solution came easy: I passed out.

With all the excitement, lack of sleep, the cold, the many aspirins I had taken plus the bottle of wine, I let myself drop.

So they picked me up placing me on a couch in the

commissaire's private office. Soon the nice commissaire began to caress me, but when he tried to investigate my underwear I thought it was time to "wake up."

His somewhat embarrassed smile made me aware that it was now a different situation. He then suggested to go to a hotel and take the train back to Paris tomorrow morning. The detectives locked the door of my hotel room, which had no toilet, but there was a sink and, as it is customary in France, a bidet.

The next morning at an unearthly hour someone banged at my door, screaming: "Your train leaves in fifteen minutes!" I made it.

Suddenly I found myself in an express train to Paris filled with French soldiers.

I was free.....

On my arrival in Paris I did not dare going to the suburbs to see my sister's father in law knowing only too well, that the police there might pick me up and send me to jail or a concentration camp. So I checked into a small hotel near the railroad station where I registered with the number of my former carte d'identité which I had memorized hoping, that it would take some time to discover this. But when it got dark I went to see my sister's father in law, who stood at the window waiting for me and happily embraced me.

He agreed that, under the circumstances, it would be advisable to remain in Paris.

The next morning I went to Mr.B. at the police headquarters, who was glad to see me. After asking many questions about what happened at the frontier he locked me in his office, took my expulsion papers and returned them with a legal stamp that permitted me to remain in France for another three days (called a "sursaut.") This meant that within these three days I had to return to the police station to stand in line again for hours to get another permission for additional three days. The continuation was nothing but a repetition:

every three days standing in line to get a permission to remain in France for another three days.

Eventually it was changed to five days and somewhat later to ten days.

Although I was happy with my newly found freedom the old sorrow of how to live without income returned. Previously my husband had supplied me with money for rent and food. The expenses for myself I had covered with the commission on sales I made.

Most probably my husband had a bank account but did not make any attempt to acquaint me to deal with it and never in my life had I ever been inside a bank.

I did not agonize about the total destruction of the lost chances I had in the past, nor did I seriously question the rather uncertain future. At this point my only interest was who might invite me for a meal to-morrow and how am I going to arrange money for rent.

Moreover, I had to find a room for myself for the hotel in which I checked in was too expensive. Luckily my friend Sabine got me just what I needed: around the corner of the famous church "The Madeleine" for five dollars a month. The owner of this little hotel was a nice middle aged woman who was hiding an illegal older Jew, crying bitterly when the police picked him up to be sent to a concentration camp.

It was an eerie time and I was constantly scared with the idea when it was going to be my turn and always checked the various cars in our street before I would venture to go home.

My room was tiny but it was clean and it had a window overlooking some rooftops of Paris. I watched the shiny moon emanating "eternity" and the house had a peaceful atmosphere with its steep carpeted staircase I was only glad to climb.

Among the few friends we accumulated it was Joe, the belt designer with whom I shared the experience of my daily rounds to buyers where I would advertise his name and merchandise. Sometimes, although seldom, I made a sale. For lunch I usually returned to Joe and his assistant where we would discuss and laugh together. Most of the time Joe supplied my meager lunch with some wine, cheese and cake which helped substantially.

Unfortunately, Joe's sister appeared one day on the scene, who also had fled the war and the way she behaved gave me the impression that she disliked me. Thus, I had lost my lunch which was a serious deprivation. It made me cry one day in front of Joe, who then assured me not to worry and just come as I always did. However, the charm of previous days had vanished. With the presence of this other woman - much older than any of us, a bit sour, apparently resenting my presence.

Christmas was in the air, but there was no peace. Meanwhile the French Government initiated a special army which would accept people like my husband.

Originally, the French thought the refugees might join their Foreign Legion, but this was rejected, since they would not become French citizens nor would their spouses receive any alimony.

However, now the French Government agreed to form a different army, which would include the benefits of their regular army for the volunteers.

Thus, at Christmas time my husband appeared in his French uniform for a few days leave before going to Marocco.

We did not have much to say to one another. The needed adjustments of endless years from bad to worse, and perhaps now to death, had piled up barriers, which we were unable to overcome within a few days. And so he left and I continued my former pattern of life.

The feeling to live in a time of unprecedented global change seemed to relieve me, having grown up during years of anxiety and apprehension.

My early childhood had been overshadowed by the first World War and my father's preoccupation due to hitherto unknown degree of inflation. This was swiftly followed by Hitler's ghost, which gradually became a reality, destroying everything in us as well as around us.

Nevertheless, now I felt as if the world in which we believed finally stood up against this evil, but how it was going to end remained the big question. A postal card from New York arrived one day written by my distantly related English relatives:

"May be we will have tea together soon..."

This seemed like a joke, since I did not even have the money for food the next week.

Going to America became a common wish among many and quite a few had left already. Joe, now my only friend, was also in the process of arranging papers to leave, something I dreaded to think about since for me his place had become like a second home.

And then came February 1940 and with it, the official season of the Haute Couture to show their collections. Among the various representatives I knew, it seemed to have been their habit to visit foreign buyers in the morning at the hotel (at times they were still in bed) or late afternoons while they had their drinks. For some reason this appeared to be a convenient arrangement for both parties. For a tip the concierge at the hotel would supply the information who might be a prospective client.

I had not the money to do so, but I had become known and was part of their "tradition." In spite of the blackout in Paris some Americans had come to see the collections, so now in February it was my turn to visit the hotels.

One afternoon I went to the Hotel Scribe, where the concierge received me with a smile while indicating a table where some Americans with their French buyers had their drinks. Knowing that I spoke some English the buyers seemed to be glad to see me, immediately inviting me to sit down.

Fate is a strange combination: Unaware that the critical point of my life had arrived, I was now going to meet the American, who was to change my life - only neither one of us knew it at that time. While sipping on my drink their questions surprised me with how little they realized the seriousness of the situation in Europe.

When the party broke up one of the Americans kept at my side asking me if I could have lunch with him to-morrow. He seemed excited, perhaps a bit nervous for some reason, while lighting a cigar in the middle of the street.

The idea to meet this pleasant man again made me

restless for which I had no explanation except that I was going to have a good meal.

He was a broad shouldered man of German extraction, elegantly dressed and immaculately clean. He was in his 60th, married a second time and had a son. About thirty pounds overweight, he had a handsome blue eyed face with lots of wrinkles. It was nice to be with him, since he kept the conversation going with many questions, attentively listening to everything. He also had a tendency to joke and we laughed a great deal together. Obviously he had the money to be generous for he was courted wherever we went. Our first lunch ended by going to a flea market which brought more laughter and a good time. As it happened his buyer had a cold and so he proposed that I take her place for which he would pay me. It was a gift of heaven.

In the few days that he remained I was able to show him around like a native for Paris had become my "home". When he left he promised to return for the midseason in May and mail me \$25.- every month for reports he needed.

The description of those wonderful May days full of exhilaration and optimism I wrote for my mother later in a notebook.

But at the time life was too fast, too exciting for me to have concentrated on writing to her while everything was happening.

But in August 1940(three months later) when mail was cut off between France and England and I could not be in touch with my mother anymore, I bought a notebook and used it to give a detailed account of those days.

Moreover, the circumstances of my life had been transformed entirely. I was no longer in Paris but in Gurs, a concentration camp in the Pyrenées, where I turned directly to this notebook with its description of the Spring - the period which begun in hope only to lead to the anxieties of internment and the rather frightening future.

I did so in an attempt to relive those perfect days, perhaps to console myself that life might change again for the better.

The portrayal written in that composition book are clearer and more vivid than I could possibly set down now, 50 years later. Central to this story is the American business man whom I had met in the Hotel lobby. Therefore the previous pages will provide the

present reader with sufficient information who and where I was in my life when I met this man. Young and pretty, abandoned and inexperienced, without money or a profession, or legal papers I met this man who had the possibility to act like a father arriving in my life like an angel. What follows now is the translation of this notebook written as

L E T T E R S T O M Y M O T H E R

LETTERS TO MY MOTHER

"Quand les lendemains ne chantent plus
de nos amours demeure au moins le souvenir ému.

Danièle Heyman

(When the morrows do not sing anymore
At least the memory of our loves
is forever lasting)

- 24 -

IN PARIS

August 1st, 1940 :

In May 1940 I was interned at the Velodrome d'Hiver (Bicycle Arena) and wanted to write you about everything that happened in Paris before, but I was totally unable to concentrate myself. Today mail service was suspended between France and England so I turn to my notebook to tell you all:

In May the weather was nice in Paris although a bit cool, when suddenly my tenseness was relieved with the news that the "clipper"¹ finally had taken off. A cable from Lisbon the next morning said, that "my American"² had arrived safely. In the evening I found the message that someone telephoned from Marseille and I should ring at 9:00 pm. However, it was too late. At 7:30 the next morning, there was again a cable in which he announced his arrival for 8:45 am.!!

I raced upstairs to change my clothes and came to the railroad station just in time. He was there....

An exclusive hotel, many things to talk about, marvellous food and a few "little" presents as he expressed it:

¹ "clipper" the name of the first commercial plane between New York and Lisbon.

² "My American" the man who is mentioned previously.

Three dozen of the most beautiful stockings
a black silk evening gown from his last collection
American cigarettes (presently unavailable)
a lovely scarf
an endless variety of the most wonderful cosmetics
and interesting journals.
All this was heaped upon me with wonderful high spirits.
I wore my new black suit with a white piqué blouse,
a red tie with a matching straw hat, new black sandals
with very high heels, black gloves with a red trim.
The next morning I saw for the first time collections
of exquisite fabrics. Everyone exerted the greatest
politeness and displayed the most magnificent things.
However, only a few made a new collection since
everyone was afraid about the war and actually did not
expect any American customers.
In the late afternoon I dragged "my American" to a
Russian church where they celebrated Whitsuntide. It
was very nice, but not as impressive as I saw it at
Easter. But since he never attended such a service he
seemed pleased.
In the evening we went to an English movie which I had
seen already, but I wanted to show it to him. He
was delighted.
And then it was Sunday. A brilliant May morning -
I wore the black coat which was cut from your
dressing gown, a black skirt with a white sweater I
crocheted myself, trimmed with a black bow, a new

black hat with a big white feather. White gloves trimmed with black. The greens and the flowers in the Champs Elysée looked luscious as we were peacefully gabbing and trotting along. Then we took a taxi to go to the horseraces in the Bois de Boulogne. But first we went to an incredibly expensive restaurant where we ate delicious food at a small table under huge old trees. The waiters actually "stank" with distinction and without a doubt, they all spoke English. Following the headwaiter's recommendation I placed fifty Francs on a certain horse and...to my surprise... I won! They paid me 1.350 Frs!! I thought I would keel over. There were seven races and, at the end, we had 1.000 Frs. more.

As we were sitting in the sun Sabine and Tony¹ emerged unexpectedly. Thus, when the races came to an end we went together to a nice coffeehouse with a glass veranda in the vicinity. At the table Sabine and I spoke French while Tony stuttered a bit in English with "my American." Suddenly Tony, who did not find a certain word, spontaneously said it in German whereupon "my American" reacted immediately crying: "You speak German.. so we understand each other !" Now we all broke into laughter, one a 100% Frenchman, the other 100% American both in their broken accents tried to discuss their problems.

¹Sabine was a professional shoe designer
Tony, her boyfriend, was a shoe manufacturer.

The following Monday we saw seven different collections and went to a musical in the evening. The costumes as well as the staging were charming showing the girls dresses as cows but with their legs exposed. The next day we worked again and had dinner in a somewhat dubious cabaret.

On Wednesday we had the appointment with Joe¹ who had insisted on meeting with us. At that time there were regulations not to serve alcohol on certain days. This I evaded by simply ordering a few bottles at the hotel and we had the drinks with Joe in our salon. Joe spoke some English and he was extraordinarily pleasant. After he left we stayed the entire evening in that salon while drinking and having continuous fits of laughter. Only around 11:00 pm we finally decided to go and eat something.

After working the next day we went to a Greta Garbo film we both liked. Then on Saturday came for me an unforgettable evening when we met Joe again this time at the famous restaurant of Maxims.

There came a moment when these two men drank for my health and for seeing each other again in New York!

¹ Joe, the belt designer previously mentioned for whom I worked as his representative.

Yes, Mutka - I want to go over - I never wrote you of this, I did not want to upset you, since I am still here and one never knows what may come between. But my plan is made. I believe it possible that this war may last a good many years longer and that we who are labelled as "indésirables," will never find peace here.

My dream is to return to France but with an American passport. How and when I would be able to accomplish this, is still a complete riddle, but I know now that here is no hope. Consequently, when "my American" returned in May, offering me again his help to go to America I agreed full heartily. Thus, at Maxim's all our three faces were radiant with the thought:

A M E R I C A !!!

It was my last happy Saturday evening since already the next day the papers reported that Hitler had invaded Holland and Belgium. The horseraces were cancelled and on this "huntsuntide" one could not really do very much. We did not even feel like having lunch and sat in the sun on the Champs Elysée talking about America and European politics as it should be, how it is, the awesome implications and about our plans. Finally we went to a musical film with Jascha Haifetz. On Monday we went to an American lawyer since we both recognized the necessity of a legal document between us.

The lawyer offered "my American" an expensive cigar and some marvellous cigarettes for me. He did not advise us to make a contract but rather an agreement. At the end he did not charge us anything. And then we went to the American Consulate to have our "agreement" confirmed and to get some information about my possible leaving. I knew to be a hopeless case, but "my American" wanted to convince himself. At the Consulate they told me that I will be interned in two days. I could not believe this. After all, my husband had been mobilized and so I thought that they would let me leave after two or three days. But the fear stuck in my bones. What shall I do, what to take? We were permitted 60 pounds of luggage but only 50 Frs. and food for two days. "My American" admired my calmness - for I showed only "ice" on the outside, but he was terribly upset. Immediately he asked Joe which lawyer could be consulted - but he was out of town. His wife, who spoke a fluent English, had great understanding for my situation since her best girlfriend was also a German refugee. She told us that, together with her husband they had tried everything, but there seems to be no escape. So I prepared -- I had an idea what would be ... Of course, I could not realize its dimensions as it actually happened ... unfortunately.

Since all our belongings were stored in my relative's bookstore(which was locked now) I bought two cotton blouses, comfortable shoes, socks, a pyjama. an entire pound of ham, hard boiled eggs, a box of butter, fruit, chocolate etc.

Joe gave me his precious sleeping bag which he had bought originally for himself and his sister a travel bag, a pillow and two towels. I paid my rent up to June and left some money with Joe's sister so that she might be able to send me something. I promised "my American" to cable him as soon as I am free again. Although 50 Frs. were permitted I took 300 Frs. Jewelry and the many pretty things "my American" had given me I left, which was rather difficult for me to do, but I was afraid they would be stolen. I had no idea with whom I would get mixed up, and after all, I thought it will be only a few days..... Then "my American" brought a giant bottle of perfume and a big English book by Vicky Baum. This man gave me more in two weeks than anyone in years. And now the time was here -- as a last thought he brought me a bottle of wine...

On May 15th, 1940 at 6:00 pm, sunny and humid, loaded with packages, nervous and excited the American and myself went through Paris in a taxi into uncertainty

"You dont mind if I cry" he said. "It is about twenty years ago that I was crying - I can no more. My whole life I earned money for something and now something is wrong and I am helpless."

His eyes were moist but he could not cry, neither could I - it was strange ---

When we arrived at the specified place there was already a giant queue of women squeezed together on the sidewalk, hot and perspiring next to their various luggage pieces. As they sat there one taxi after another ~~followed~~. From one half hour to the next one could move about two steps, masses of policemen chasing away the husbands and brothers, who only wished to assist their women in their last free hour. Bottles broke and across the street stood those simple minded French, looking at this spectacle, calling us "boches"(pigs) and similar expressions. Some wept.

A thunderstorm slowly began to form as we stood and stood. "My American" told every policeman that he does not understand any French, walked around the block and returned. Then he fetched from the coffeehouse at the corner a glass with ice and orange juice for me, walked around again and then picked up the empty glass. For two minutes he dared to come close to me,

walked around the block in an excitement beyond himself. He said that he felt like going to the American Ambassador to bring him here and to let him see this impossible situation. But he did not dare to leave me anymore - we stood there already for two hours.

Any moment the thunderstorm would break and he began to laugh at the idea, how all these women would run away. Of course me too when the rain would come down. But the police recognized this also and suddenly the control at the entrance stopped and everybody could go in. It was 8:45 pm - "My American" carried my bag up to the door and accidentally came to be next to Ilse (a good friend). His last words were: "I am going to fight now." For me this meant that he would try everything to get me as soon as possible to the United States. The door closed behind me.

THE INTERNMENT AT THE VELODRÔME D'HIVER. (Bicycle Arena)

There was a steep staircase in the dark, watched by soldiers, which I had to climb with my bag heavy with the bottle of wine and food packages. Once upstairs there were lots of chairs which were used for the people coming to see the bicycle races. A giant black painted glassroof stretched like a huge vault above us. Below, the racetrack was still vacant, but the chairs used in the "orchestra" section had been removed and there women sat on strawbags next to their luggage. There was an immense mountain of straw and a soldier distributed sacks. If you wanted to sleep on something you had to fill your own bag. We were not permitted to be below, since that space was reserved for those who passed the control.

Some were lying between the chairs and the gangway was full, so I went to look for something else and found a floor above us with more comfortable places for my friend Ilse and myself. We filled our sacks in an unbelievable cloud of dust and then dragged our belongings upstairs to "install" ourselves. Washing was an impossibility - and a toilet? One could find it follow the stench.

There was no water, not in the toilets nor anywhere else, so I gave up this enterprise.

Around 11:00 pm the lights were turned down and it became quiet. Together with Ilse I finished drinking the wine which made us a bit drunk and slept.

The loudspeaker told us to be ready at 6:00am. We woke up around five.. Everybody was getting dressed and so were we. No water!

At six nothing happened. I ate some of my fruit, we talked, made conversation and thought it to be about 10:30 but it was only 7:30..... My God, what to do?

The loudspeaker:"Hallo, hallo....."

We sharpened our ears not to miss anything important, but there was nothing special.- We went downstairs to find perhaps some friends. The loudspeaker again - and then it was only 8:15. I was tired to death.

The entire hall was in constant movement with 3000 women, hundreds of soldiers, smoking prohibited, no water, no furniture.....

I tried to read those beautiful magazines "my American" gave me, but then the loudspeaker came. People surrounded me, sitting on the floor gossiping, the loudspeaker squawking, no toilet, no cigarettes, no coffee, no fresh air, noise...

My God, what to do??

What to think, what to do.....it is only 9:30.

Exhausted I slept again.

Ilse had disappeared, she walked around and met "130" acquaintances, I saw no one, they were all strangers to me. At noon I ate two eggs and some ham. Thirsty--- no water - no toilet.

But suddenly we were told, that we had to go through the control, otherwise there would be no dinner. We should come with all our luggage. I went without my luggage just to see this.

~~Mukka~~----- UNDESCRIBABLE!!!!!!

In a half dark gangway were literally hundreds of women who fell over their own luggage, some had passed out - it was a frightful sight. What nonsense taking all this luggage - I thought, the entire situation was far from organized. I went through without luggage by helping someone else to carry it. The control consisted of showing one's ID papers to receive a number.

Since my husband was mobilized I was labelled to be a "special case." My friend Ilse was also a special case because her mother was her dependent. Tilly was a special case too, since her three brothers were at the front. Sitting opposite me was a certain Madame G. whose French husband was not mobilized for his poor vision. But since she married him only nine months ago and naturalization takes place only after one year, she was interned as well.

Lotte, called "Starlet" for she was an astrologer had her American visa, but the French did not give her the needed exit visa. Mrs. E. (a close friend of ours) was there too, although her husband volunteered for the Foreign Legion but was not accepted since he was over fifty. It made ^{me} furious to see all this. One woman had her brother in South America and arranged to have a South American passport. But the French did not recognize her passport on the contrary, they became suspicious. Another example was a physician from Poland who married an Austrian but divorced him seven years ago. However, the French refused to consider her to be a Pole for during wartime one cannot change nationality.

However, there were more serious cases: Pregnant women and sick ones, even seriously sick. They took them up to fifty years. At night I heard sighing and weeping and then someone took poison - if she died or not we never knew. The soldiers transported her out and there was another. Some had heart attacks.

The loudspeaker went the entire day. The windows were open day and night causing a draft. The second day we got water!

This meant five faucets in the courtyard for 3.000 people - to wash ones hands took about two hours of standing in line. To wash thoroughly was impossible since others pushed and everywhere stood soldiers watching.

The toilets had no water at all and looked like overly filled potato bowls. Most vomited in disgust. Ilse turned a yellowish green, but I was cold. I could not think or feel anymore.

But there were other toilets: green painted wooden little "houses," with a door, then came three steps (coated with feces) to reach a kind of platform. Now the door covered the body, but one could see the outside. There were 28 of these green "houses" for 3.000 women and several hundred soldiers. I was not the only one living "without" - only urine... Many had to be brought to the medical section to get laxatives. It was "God" who helped me. It is only natural that if one waits an eternity, one misses the target or elderly who cannot bend their knees anymore. It was to get nauseous in a true sense of the word.

Women to clean toilets were non existent, nothing was organized except the soldiers watching us day and night. Seating posts about ten meters high originally made for the judges of their bicycle races there saw enthroned the soldiers day and night in eternal light. At the loudspeaker, in the kitchen, on every door were soldiers. Most people judged the food as "impossible or bad." I was immune. I ate like an animal, not really hungry and I did not think it was that bad.

In the morning there was dry bread and black coffee. For lunch rice, potatoes or lentils with meat, or something like it. The same in the evening. As an enrichment the family Rothchild supplied us for lunch with a spoon of applesauce and in the evening with a tiny piece of camembert. But we all still had some fruit or chocolate. The worst for me was the constant noise and the totally killing loudspeaker. For 3.000 women many packages arrived, about 700 daily. They were announced on the loudspeaker. For instance:" Gerda Marcus -- Ger--da--- Mar---cus-- "spelled and repeated.

If there would have been a pattern in their repetition, it would not have been so bad. But at times he spelled the name twice - sometimes only the last name, sometimes he called the entire name six times etc.etc.

Now imagine if 700 names are only repeated three times that means more than 2.000 names daily.

Of course I hoped to get a package too and so I was forced to pay attention. Moreover, we were now partitioned into groups and each one chose a group leader. We had a rather German looking woman with the name of Louise. The group leaders were called over the loudspeaker to pick up bread or when the meals were distributed or mail arrived or when they needed volunteers. For this list or any other list - everything came through the loudspeaker.

I did not have a single melody anymore in my brain -
I came to my very end and wept for hours.

Twenty four hours after going into this Velodrome I
received a lovely cable from my husband. He read about
this in the papers and cabled in good faith, that it
might reach me. It made me feel good.

After three days "my American" succeeded that I would
be called to see him. He came with some unimportant
papers 'just to fake.' A soldier, who spoke some
English stood next to us trying to catch everything
we said. "My American" only said good-bye and that there
are no more planes and would leave with Joe to-morrow
for Lisbon. After he left, the soldier questioned me
and I proudly showed him my agreement confirmed by the
American Consulate. Nevertheless, he confiscated the
papers "my American" had brought me.

Somehow I felt stronger, my husband's cable and the
visit from "my American" gave me the feeling not to be
so utterly abandoned.

In that tiny courtyard with the narrow gangway I could
see the Eiffeltower with the French flag flying a
different direction each day. I hoped that even in
my life the wind may turn towards happiness and
Hitler's wind will turn as everything will turn.

The "fresh" air we got in that courtyard was the overwhelming stench from the 28 green wooden "houses" which stood there besides an infernal noise from a factory next door. At the other end was our kitchen where large pieces of soot were flying about like mosquitos. For me the most wonderful was the Eiffel-tower with its ever turning flag.

And then I met Suse! We greeted each other as old acquaintances, talking for hours about mutual friends. She was nice and also had pleasant neighbors here, such as the Polish physician, as well as a girl named Hansi, whose husband made the ingenious procedure for tinting mirrors. There was also a designer who wore a heavy makeup in spite of all this confusion here. Lottchen also belonged there, a short woman married to a Russian refugee for the past three months. She was completely confused, in love and funny as hell. With this group I had coffee or tea in the afternoon which we made ourselves. It was much nicer with them than with my friend Ilse, who accepted an assignment and going the entire day from one person to the next. Only in the evening we got together and talked intensely about politics since she was always able to read secretly some newspapers, which were not permitted for us. Ilse understood the political situation, thinking logically like a man.

But at night we thought and calculated, the soldiers went up and down with their metal helmets glistening in the dull light which was never extinguished.

There was a draft, it was cold and we looked anxiously toward the immense glass roof which would all hurt us if.....

After six days it rained at night, so I placed my old furcoat on top of my sleeping bag, but nevertheless I was totally in water the next morning.

In the meantime a committee was established to examine each case individually. I was pessimistic, since I had an expulsion order, but perhaps now that my husband was mobilized I had a chance. Some women were set free, but only a very few - at times two or three. Since we were 3000 one could count how long this procedure would take.... unimaginable. However, one morning the loudspeaker suddenly came with a different male voice: "Hallo -- all without any exception have to be ready to leave within the next two hours to go to the sunny south. Keep your courage even there will be a Commission to look into your cases, you will feel more comfortable there than here....."

Immediately all began to scream, to cry or to go practically insane. I thought that Paris probably became a war zone and that certain things are happening about which we have no idea.

I was quite still, put my few things together, went to Suse, who was terribly excited and weeping. We placed our luggage in a row, so that when the time came we would be at least together. There was terrible excitement everywhere and the loudspeaker came again but this time he announced, that only those whose names are called now, should present themselves to remain here.

This time the names were neither repeated nor spelled, obviously packages were more important. Moreover, these German names were badly pronounced and one had to be 100% alert to understand the names. One name after another with a rather dull intonation: 10, 20, 100, 300, 600, 800 names and if it had not been for Suse I would have missed my name. From Beerel, they made it Becril.

Exhilarated we fell in each other's arms. Those were the special cases who were exempt. In front of the loudspeaker formed masses of people. Once the procedure was finished we were guided into a room with a kind of gallery led by a dark staircase and there on top stood a woman.

She looked at us as if we were diseased. One soldier screamed some names and then one should come forward which was an impossibility, since we stood like sardines and could not move at all.

It was hot and seemed to last an eternity. In the meantime the others had left.

When we were finished with this hell-hole we got the order to move downstairs. New groups were formed but we kept our Louise. Else and myself were together again and a somewhat better time seemed to come.

The next day everything was supposed to get cleaned which we gladly did. Now there was room - and we had some hope to be set free in the next few days. The cast-off strawbags of the others were placed together piling into a regular mountain. Empty bottles collected, everything was made wet and brushed. The staircases and gangways cleaned. The soldiers as well as the supervisors were nicer, the court was suddenly enlarged and twenty new faucets functioned for us to wash ourselves. One woman volunteered for payment to clean the toilet facilities, the food was better, a kind of canteen began to function, the loudspeaker only seldom heard.

I breathed again - the sun was nice, one could sit in the courtyard on and off, the toiletwoman arranged little places, where one could wash without being observed by soldiers. It was rather urgent in my case for I had developed already a bad sore next to my "holiest." In that cabin one could get a bowl of cold water, four to five women did the same and for that we paid something.

Moreover, between 1:30 and 3:30 one could smoke in the courtyard. But already after a few days we smoked the entire evening and finally the whole day. At 4:00 pm we even received hot water, so we could make our tea and coffee. "verything suddenly was much easier.

One evening it was especially nice in our group: The Polish physician had received a package with cake, Suse had some cookies, Lottchen dispensed some cherries, we had a nice conversation and it was charming.

Sunday we had a real dinner with fried steak and pommes frites, which were marvellous.

One day I heard music -- a violin -- first I thought that perhaps there is a radio somewhere, but then I followed the sound -- in this giant hall I erred again and again, when I finally found in the first floor on a dark staircase a woman who played a Bach concerto. I felt as if I were in a green meadow. It was a certain Mrs.S. who gave concerts in Germany. When she realized that I know something about music she got irritated and went away, obviously disturbed with my presence.

One evening I was sitting with Suse in the courtyard and talked to the kitchen superintendent. It was dark already and most people slept when he suddenly got a bottle of wine for us. We were delighted after such a long time to get a bit of wine.

It was the evening before my birthday. The next morning Ilse woke me with an affectionate kiss and in the evening I got a nice cable from my husband and a long letter.

But my birthday was spoiled by a summons from the committee. They were not nice to me because I had an expulsion which made them suspicious. Furthermore, I was told that they would not release me under any circumstances. I was heartbroken and assumed that they intended some special procedures for me. I wrote to my friend Sabine to please cable "my American" explaining that the committee's decision had been negative and to bring me some personal articles on Monday.

Until Monday no packages were accepted but Monday and Tuesday one could receive them.

The next day all of us were obliged to help emptying the 2000 sacks of straw from the ones who left for the "sunny south." One cannot possibly imagine the dust! Most of us tied a large handkerchief over nose and mouth. Then the sacks were rolled together, counted and the straw was picked up.

In the meantime we had news of those who had left. They were interned in Gurs, the former camp of the Spanish refugees in the Pyrenées which was surrounded with barbed wire and snowcapped mountains. We shuddered. Knowing that his camp had ugly epidemics it was also supposed to be dirty and now these women wrote of hunger as well.

One rumor after another^{be} circulated among us: some said that we would be freed in a few days, others thought we will be shipped out. However, being labelled as "special cases" we were convinced that in any case we would be sent to a different camp than Gurs.

On Sunday, June 2nd 1940 the same "theater" repeated itself: We leave???

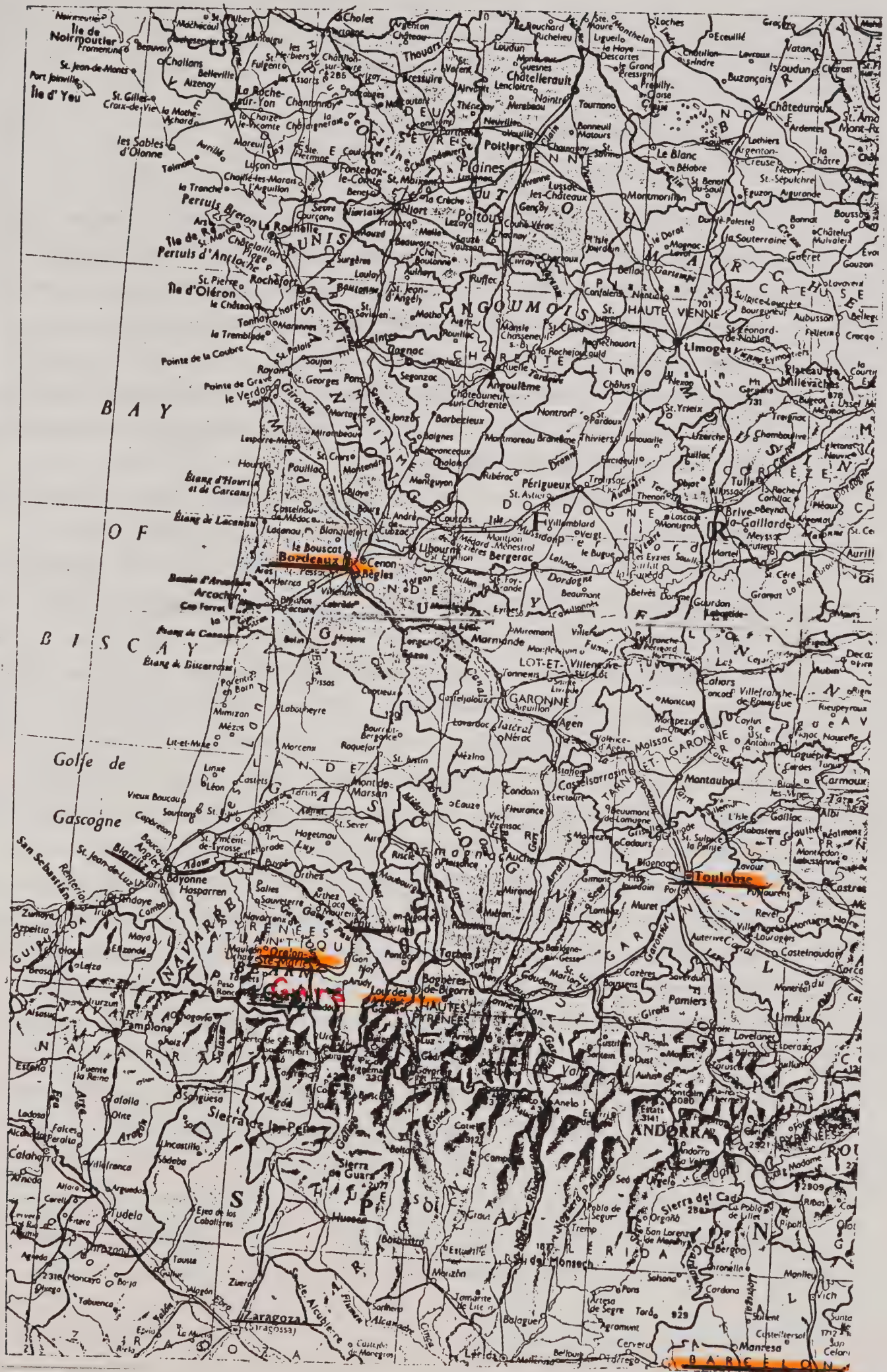
I did not get excited anymore, on the contrary, perhaps it was good to get some air and to be treated like anyone else. Like the others I packed my belongings and wrote a card to Joe's sister informing her that I was obliged to leave.

It was a pleasant trip. However, our sudden departure deprived us of the packages we were supposed to receive. We balked about all the things which were going to be lost, although we were told that they would be forwarded - which, of course never happened.

We had a nice bus from the Air France, but others had to take trucks meant for animals.

As we turned the corner, there stood a handsome chap with outstretched arms making a fist. He was Louise's fiancé whose wedding was supposed to be in two days. He was ready to join the Polish army -- and Louise?? Our eyes filled with tears while the bus went along the Seine passing the beautiful streets of Paris...

20 SOUTHERN FRANCE



THE TRIP TO GURS

The weather was glorious and the train went faster than I thought it would. I had expected to be on the road for many days and nights, but the train travelled at normal speed. All the time I looked out the window to enjoy the fresh air,

At the different stopping stations we were not permitted to go out, but there were many soldiers at our disposal to buy us anything we wished.

We came to Bordeaux via Orléans. I could even sleep during the night by stretching my feet over to Hilde, who affectionately warmed and covered them. Bread, corned beef and even some chocolate were distributed by the soldiers. There was a real toilet and water so we could wash ourselves. The next morning we were still travelling, the weather was fine again and we began to look at the little map in the train to find out where we were actually going. No one knew. We seem to go more and more south, it was hot and we drank a lot of wine. Then we came to Dax then to Pau from where we could see the snow capped mountains of the Pyrenées and began to realize that most probably we would also land in Gurs. Suddenly our good mood changed altogether. The trip would be over soon and we would be interned again - what a horrible thought!

In Pau there was a change of engine and we came closer to the Spanish border, still without any explanations.

I had the impression that they would take us just anywhere, so people could easily forget about us.....

We travelled on and on. Finally we landed in Oloron St. Marie where it was unbelievable hot. An endless row of trucks arrived occupied by strange looking men in rags. Those were the Spanish refugees, interned in Gurs since the Franco war, not permitted neither to enter France legally nor to return to Spain.

They took our luggage and twenty five of us were placed like freight into a truck where we had to stand. Old, half blind, pregnant, handicapped or sick ones- no matter. And so we went and went through villages which became smaller and smaller --- the trees seem to stare at us -- it felt awful.

After about twenty minutes we saw barracks, barracks without end, an entire city of barracks. Green trees or bushes had all suddenly disappeared and there was nothing but brown ugly soil with barracks. First we saw men behind barbed wires - then women screaming hysterically when they saw us. We were the ones who had hoped to be released soon, but now lost hope when they saw us, the so called "special cases" coming too.

The barrack city was partitioned into "ilots." Each ilot consisted of about 20-25 barracks, in which was room for about 48 people, but we were 60 crammed in. Besides the various ilots for men there were seven for women, about 8.000 of them. Each ilot was surrounded with barbed wire and it was not even permitted to visit or to call each other. All of us were terribly upset with fright, anxiety and excitement. The sun burned, ugly looking strawbags were laying about, and a blond very German looking girl made a speech, saying that she was our barrack chief.

Great uproar! Some refused to enter the barrack, refused to eat and got themselves into a terrible state of excitement. I did not scream with them, but watched a guardian in a white coat coming along who apparently tried to remember those who provoked the others. But since the screaming was done in German, the French guardian did not understand what it was all about. She left, but returned with a soldier to take these women to an office. An hour passed and the captain of the camp appeared to explain the situation. At that moment I tried to get through the crowd to see this man, who would have the power to decide our future fate. He was about 50, nice and very kind looking, calming all of us which was indeed a feat. Like a father he listened to each one and tried to explain that he understood our situation only too well. His own house went up in flames and he did not even know the whereabouts of his own family. Perhaps it was not so, but it worked to calm us. Nevertheless, I had the impression that he would try his best as long as he was in charge of this camp. The food that evening was bad and there was not very much. It seemed that they had failed to anticipate the many new people that would need to be fed. I had my place next to Ilse and our group was more or less together again. The night was a blessing since there were no more soldiers walking up and down. For the first time in three weeks to have silence was a condition we take for granted but I felt it as a vivid sensation.

The next day we did not know what to do with ourselves. The sun burned and the sky was of a magnificent blue, the snow capped mountains in the distance. But shadow - was non existent. No trees , nor bushes and the barracks did not seem to make any shadows. There was not a chair nor a table, nowhere to go. What to do?

We were permitted to mail telegrams, but there were no forms available so we wrote on plain paper. I mailed one to Joe's sister to please mail me again Frs.500.-, to Sabine to be so kind to forward my new address to "my American" and one to my husband which the barrack chief collected.

Some girls constructed a tent with all kinds of blankets and wooden sticks supported by barbed wire. At lunchtime my friend Ilse had joined a different group and I was rather disappointed. In Paris we always ate together so why this sudden change? She also seemed to behave differently. But the other, Hilde, was still nice and so we remained together. Her husband was a "prestataire"(a member of the workforce of the English troops) and being without news from him, brought her to make the wildest assumptions. One day she thought him to be in England, then to be wounded somewhere or dead. In fact her behavior seemed to change also. In the beginning she was excited about "Starlet", then she became enthusiastic about Lisa, then Louise and

and Gerda, until no one of our clique wanted to be bothered with her anymore. She then became bitter and cynical, finally landing in the hospital barrack and we felt relieved to be rid of her.

Nevertheless, during the first days in this camp Hilde lightened my life with all sorts of nice things. Perhaps her attitude to get excited about one girl to the next was a symptom of a kind of camp "disease" - I don't know. Ilse had her "meschugas" the first days too and so did Trude. Ilse's frenzy consisted to making a great "ado" about her new clique, not paying any attention to me and finally throwing biting remarks at me about anything. Finally she began to be nasty to others also, had a fight with someone until one day she rolled herself on her strawbag and wept. She was grateful when I talked to her and, after a few hours she was OK again, although she soon was again like a poisonous snake to me. However, she had reasons about her disorder: At the camp it suddenly became quite important to be married. It was natural, since for us, soldier's wives being behind barbed wire was not justified. We composed long lists about who was who, with the various nationalities etc. During the first weeks there was really only one important theme: The Man..

"But my man is with the Czech Army--"

"Well what do you think, my man is at the front.."

"Ah, yours is only a prestataire.."

"What do you mean 'only' the prestataires have to tolerate just as much as those at the front -- I had no news for the past five weeks, I go crazy..."

Most of them were crazy - but to return to Ilse, I knew that she had wanted to get married already for years, but did not succeed. She had an Italian boyfriend who was married and of whom she always spoke of "my man."

Now suddenly she realized to be single, feeling badly when everybody seemed to be married, but she was not.

However, all this commotion over these lists of our husbands in uniform gave us something to do.

After two weeks someone from the military appeared to question us and took all our identity papers. Nothing else happened. But until everything was organized many women worked over these lists, investigations, meetings, etc. and time passed.

I enjoyed the sun, tried to read, had discussions with Hilde, became friends with "Starlet" and tried to get used to the disagreeable sides of the camp, such as the large number of rats, who had their homes under our barracks.



CAREER IN FRANCE—NONE

The toilet was not any too nice either, and there was not very much to eat. I found a bedbug and there were lice. One needed one's entire willpower to remain normal, since most people became hysterical, quite apart from those who were already crazy.

Luckily soon they organized a kind of canteen, and immediately I tried to work there. But many wanted this job also for everything was rationed and we thought to have a better chance to get something while working there. The rationing was severe: such as five cigarettes for sixty people or one cheese or three oranges for sixty. The few days in which I helped in this canteen I bought as much as I could although Hilde warned me to run out of money. But I did not think so for my trust in "my American" was endless. Unfortunately Hilde was right. The papers brought unbelievable news and on June 13th the Germans were in Paris....

Many were weeping -- but I got very upset: what will be? The days passed when on June 19th (my parent's wedding day) a girl came running with the message that we are all free and those married to soldiers would receive a certificate of liberation at the office at once!

I was totally overwhelmed, but Hilde turned pale saying: "Listen kids, that means 'sauve qui peut' - the Germans are coming."

However, according to what we saw in the newspapers the Germans were only up to the Loire. There was a giant uproar. In any case I went to get this release paper. It was 5:00 pm. Some already had packed their belongings and walked along the sandy road full of enthusiasm. To be without barbed wire - FREE - what a feeling!! I was drunk with joy. I had planned to go to Mont de Marsan where some of Joe's friends lived, in fact Joe gave me his address just in case.. It was there where I thought to go for the time being assuming to find Joe's sister there as well. Seeing myself at the hairdresser again - what a delight!! I was so excited I could not sleep. At dawn I got up to pack my sack, but when I felt the bag being very heavy, I left it in the barrack to find out about the bus schedule. I was told the bus only left at 11:30 which gave me a lot of time and returned to the barrack. "Starlet" questioned me where I was going so I told her, but she thought I could not do this, since the people might not be there anymore and I should find this out before leaving. Then Hilde came and all the reasonable ones, who thought that one should not go north, when the Germans are obviously coming south. The best thing would be to remain in this part of the country or go East, which was right. In the meantime, one group after another left. Only some knew where they were going, and the barracks got empty.

But again I went out on the road, it was sheer delight to be free and walk around. However, there was no trace of a bus, my mood changed, I became discouraged and so I remained thinking that Hilde's viewpoint was right.

Now our barrack was half empty. While working in the canteen we had taken some boxes we used as chairs, and the ones who left already had made a table and a large bench we now had for us. A week ago we moved to a different ilot with more room and, with our liberation certificat, we could go wherever we wanted.

I went out every morning to speak to soldiers, went to a restaurant to eat a good meal with wine and enjoyed the green bushes again. I also wrote to Joe's friend if ¹ could come but my freedom was lost after a few days when everything was blocked again.

Apparently great many people had left the camp when they had the chance to do so. However, being without shelter, frequently with insufficient money and/or not knowing where to go, many perished, became a burden or an embarrassment for public places, such as hospitals, police stations or the likes.

Thus, the new order required that no one can be released unless they have enough money or adequate proof to have a relative or a friend with whom they can live, which presented a rather difficult situation for many.

Then the Germans arrived in our camp which naturally created a tremendous excitement among us. They said to have come to "liberate" their German women such as people from Elsass Lothringen, who wished to return, but also the others, "the Aryans." First it was the question of who wanted to go back to Germany, then the ones who liked to return into the occupied zone under German protection, which also meant Paris, but many were undecided.

The absence of description of overseers and guards, as well as psychological or physical stress at the camp of Gurs may surprise the reader. However, Gurs belonged to France, and its function as a "concentration camp" only became established when France came to power, forcing those who had fought him to flee.

France had the reputation as a land of freedom as in the welcome given Russian refugees after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1918. But the Spanish refugees at the time of the Civil War were refused many privileges other aliens formerly enjoyed, and many Spanish refugees were interned and obliged to remain in Gurs under rather poor condition.

Nevertheless, in 1940 the camp belonged to France and the Nazis only came there to "collect" those who wished to return to Germany. Consequently, while I was confined there, Gurs functioned as an internment camp and not as a concentration camp, as the term is understood today.

However, in May 1940, when the French were threatened to be overrun by the Nazis, they suspected that there were spies among the many aliens in their midst. To get rid of them they decided to intern all enemy aliens regardless of their individual circumstances.

As I pointed out previously the captain of Gurs seemed to be a nice man and we had the freedom to do whatever we liked, although in this situation it was rather limited.

In fact, it was probably quite easy to escape (especially at night), since the camp was situated in the middle of nowhere, with only a few guards, who preferred to socialize rather more than to limit the inmates in their secret comings and goings.

In August 1940 I left the camp, but those who were obliged to remain, had to face the winter in this mountainous region without any comfort; probably many froze to death. Moreover, when the Nazis occupied all of France, they shipped as many as they could to the East, where the hell of Auschwitz and Treblinka awaited them.

Many had left and so life in the barracks was better now. Someone took the initiative to form a group of eleven girls to eat together around a large suitcase covered with a towel. Collectively we bought some bacon, or sausage when available. When someone received a package it was shared and each of the eleven got something.

It was the time after Pétain shook Hitler's hand on June 19th and when it began raining in buckets for days so that the soil did not absorb the moisture anymore and the ditches around the barracks were full of water. Walking meant that your feet would sink so deep into the mud that it was a problem to get them out without losing a shoe, which would get stuck in the mud. Luckily our group had two pairs of rubber boots which we used alternately each time one of us had to use the toilet which lay more than two hundred yards away. Furthermore, we only had a little piece of wood to scrape the dirt off our shoes which was insufficient to prevent it from being carried into our barrack.

The rain was beating so hard on the roof that we had to speak very loud to hear each other, and the humidity permeated our clothes and strawbags on which we slept.

Moreover, due to the high elevation at Gurs it got ice cold. It was the time when the United States blocked the mailing of money to France. Since I had counted on the continuity to receive funds from "my American" I wrote a desperate letter to the American Express in Nice to get some advice. However, I was not the only one in that situation, for many other internees had someone in the States who helped them in the past. It was the time when we had to move again to another ilot which had to be done at a specific hour, rain or shine.

Usually the other barrack was quite dirty, and we did not know who the others would be, nor the quantity of rats under the barrack floor. Nor did we know if mail would continue to reach us.

In the beginning our address had been "Ilot L", then we were changed into "Ilot L21", and now it was going to be "Ilot G."

While moving we had another heavy rainfall and the suitcases as well as ourselves got drenched. However, this was a new barrack, but it was unfinished.

Our barrack chief was a nice physician from Vienna.

One day a strange looking girl came into our barrack asking us the permission to paint one of us.

She wore very high shabby boots, a particularly ugly raincoat with a matching hat, and huge loose pants which hung flabbily around her legs. She was a bit heavy, had a childlike face and dark blond short cut hair. For two hours she drew Lisa with charcoal. It looked great. Afterwards she showed us a few nice things she did and spoke about making designs like applications on a "wallcarpet," which gave me the idea of applying similar designs to evening dresses. Asking her a few questions led to our seeing each other daily.

When we had to change our ilot again she asked us to reserve a place for her in our barrack. With the stolen boxes from the canteen, the selfmade table, the nails we had pulled out from walls, we moved again in pouring rain. However, many of our group left soon after, since most of them were from Nice and had been waiting for their liberation papers.

Hedi, who slept opposite me got sick, Lisa was picked up by her husband and "Pöppchen" decided to be under the protection of the Nazis so she came into another ilot. "Scorpiönchen" traveled to her "Dicker" trusting her luck, Trude said she could not stand it anymore and went to a friend in a nearby village. Another woman who always wanted me to give her a summary of the evening news went to her husband in another camp, Gerda went with very

little money to people she knew near Toulouse. Thus, from our group, only Lily, the painter, Louise, Hilde, Starlet and myself were left. It was still summer -- there was still hope that everything would be OK before the arrival of the Pyrenean winter, where even during the summer the nights were already bitter cold. There was still hope -- still.....

One day Hilde gave me the advice to write to my distant English relatives in New York so that they could get in touch with "my American." In one of her last letters my mother had writtem their new address in New York and, since many were leaving, there was the chance to post my letter outside the camp, which I did.

In those days the mood was as if we were on "vacation." Many received mail or were leaving, and many of us thought that the Allies lost the war but hoped nevertheless that one day we would all leave the camp.

One day a professional nightclub singer from Vienna was to celebrate her birthday to which we were invited. It looked very festive for they went to the village (against permission) to buy wonderful things. There was a real table with wine, cakes

and fruit beautifully laid out. Then, when it got dark with a luminous shiny moon we began to sing Brahms and Schubert songs in two and three voices until very late at night.

Two days later I got sick with high fever, vomiting and diarrhea, which was most uncomfortable since our toilet was so far away and I was so weakened. It was the beginning of a dangerous epidemic of which I was not aware and only thought of having eaten too much of something. My temperature rose, I sweated and slept. The girls wanted to bring me to the hospital barrack but I did not want to go. Everybody took good care of me, feeding me with minced apple while keeping my hands in cold water, placing a bowl on both sides of me and changing the water all the time.

After three days when I could stand again by myself, Hilde brought me a cable from America: Finally!! It said: "Trying for visa, are you well?" with a paid response ticket attached.

Enraptured I told everyone of my great happiness and I was in good health again...

That same evening they had a play in a different barrack for they came to borrow my black silk pants, sandals and button down jacket which I had bought six years ago at home.

There were French chansons, without accompaniment, another girl presented songs in Yiddish and there was a little skit about our camp life: An ironic conversation between a mother and daughter about the difficulties in obtaining papers from the police, emphasizing our limitless despair at camp. At the end there was a marvellous singer with Brahms songs.

The following week I had no news.

Discouraged, I discussed with Lily what might happen to us if nothing worked out. Soon it was going to be August, the last summer month! Lily thought she would try to give English lessons when she was released and, like all of us, had no idea where she would end up. She still had Frs. 500.- which she was ready to share with me if we stuck together. In the meantime I wrote to "my American" that I had decided to go to Nice on September 1st and my address would be the American Express there. Another day someone arranged a costume party. First I thought nothing of it, but soon the gossip got around that it was a fantastic set-up, and so we went. It was really unbelievable...

The barrack's ceiling was covered with the military blankets we had. As decorations they had empty boxes of toothpaste, sardines, cheeseboxes, eggshells and bones with a record player pouring out music.

The strawbags were placed into the sloping walls so that one could sit comfortably. There was a bar with lemonade (one lemon for about ten glasses!) and candy. The women looked indescribable: earrings made from lemon peels, aluminum cups hanging on their ears, skirts of straw, pyjamas worn like maharajas, white towels draped as turbans and the like. There were even two tap dancers, dressed like men - the richness of these fantasies was fascinating to see.

After writing my husband a desperate letter, I received one cable after another from "my American" who had been notified of my address through my "uncle Erwin". The last one said: "Stay in camp until next cable -- will arrange details."

But at what time would the details be arranged ???

In general the summer evenings were spent with Starlet admiring the fantastically beautiful sunsets. The snow a glittering red on top of the mountains wrapped in a deep violet, while on the other side the sky was burning in a scarlet orange. Every evening were sensational combinations. Often we stood at the corner of the barbed wire where one could see the long road stretching out into the distance while a full moon came up.

At times the Spanish refugees would sing together as a choir and in that clean quiet mountain air these male voices would sound as beautiful as ever.

In the first days of August my husband wrote of two possibilities for me which made me very happy. First: to come to Agadir(Morocco), the town where he was mobilized. There was a naturalized Frenchman, married with four children, who was willing to take me as an aupair, since he planned to move to Casablanca and would need some help.

In the other plan I could join Mrs.I., the wife of one of his companions who lived in Aix Les Bains in a rented villa, waiting for her husband's return. She had some money and was involved in welfare activities. In his next letter my husband repeated this offer, adding that this woman already had given shelter to two other ladies and I should not hesitate to go there. In the next letter he wrote that it would be easy to find work in Aix, since this woman who never had a professions in her life had found a job.

In the meantime I had written to this woman myself, not because I lacked confidence in the plan, but I thought I should do this. Besides, I was determined to wait for the cable from America at least until September first as I had promised.

More and more people left and already there was talk about moving to another ilot again. Our postmaster chose me as her successor, which had the great advantage that I had to get up very early in the morning and was allowed more freedom. But then Hedi left who embraced me tenderly, which touched me deeply. Once gone I thought, that she was really an impressive creature, polite and charming, a good companion and yet no one really knew her except that she came from Vienna and that she was going to Nice.

The days as "postmaster" passed quickly while I was still waiting for Mrs. I.'s answer as well as for a cable from New York. But somehow I felt more relaxed now. The possibility that I might be able to go to North Africa or stay with Mrs. I. appeared to be quite definite.

In the evening of August 15th I received a tightly packed postcard from my husband in which he wrote that Mrs. I, had been informed about my coming to her, and I should no longer hesitate to go.

He emphasized, that I would always have a bed and some food there, and Mrs. I. was very willing to take me into her house.

Furthermore, he wrote of boats paid by Jewish American organizations which were taking refugees without payment from Casablanca to Canada -

I was reeling with excitement!

Now I felt it was my obligation to go to Mrs.I. as fast as possible. After all she only lived 20 minutes from Marseilles and I assumed I would find a committee, where I would be able to get some detailed information about these boats to Canada. I believed that "my American" would not know about these Jewish organizations (since he was not a Jew) and that it was up to me to find out how to get on one of these boats.

I thought the following:

As a refugee I could travel without paying to Mrs.I. who would supply me with a bed and food free of charge. If she had some money she might be able to lend me a few Francs to go to Marseilles, where I would try to find some Jewish organization to pay for my trip to Casablanca. Most probably I would get a reduced fare since my husband was mobilized and stationed in Africa. The boat from Casablanca to Canada was supposed to be free as my husband had claimed. Since it is easy to mail money from New York to Canada, I could then wait in Canada until I had a permit to enter the States.

This was my plan.....

The next day we were supposed to change our ilot yet again, and I wanted to leave the camp immediately. But that was impossible.

To receive the permission to leave was a complex process which took about ten days. Although it was against all regulations, I went directly to both the captain and the commandant, where I got the permit in 20 minutes!!

To compound my happiness the next day I received the sensational cable from New York that I should go to the American Express in Nice.

Finally money" - I felt delirious.....

On the road I met Ilda, the famous glovedesigner from Paris who was partly paralyzed from polio and was leaving also.

On August 16th the miracle happened and I will never forget that day. I had twenty Francs in my pocket which means about fifty cents. To carry my heavy bag I asked for a Spaniard to assist me on the long road which I walked now for the last time. One barrack next to another, German and Spanish refugees, Frenchmen and other foreigners, all of them stood behind the barbed wire in horrible conditions, looking at me as if I were naked, calling their last "au revoir" to me.....

Carrying everything I possessed in a bag on my back with hardly enough money for a meal in my pocket I had no doubt that eventually I would be able to join "my American" in the States. As I had previously arranged with Ilda we would meet at the end of the camp where we would find a truck which was to bring us to the railroad station of Oloron St. Marie. We sat on our luggage and tried to be as comfortable as possible, and then we had to wait.

A white haired, very nice looking woman began a conversation with me and, with my heart so full of excitement, I told her about my plan and that I would have money from America in Nice.

She laughed: "Don't make yourself any illusions, you cannot possibly receive any money from America. Even if your friend actually mailed it the French Government would confiscate it."

This made me rather uneasy, but I refused to believe it. And then the truck started to go. As if in an Amusement Park the truck went down hill all the time at a high speed, taking one curve after another, while our hair flew wildly. The women screamed while falling among all the suitcases, but I kept my balance. Breathless, we landed at the railroad station of Oloron St. Marie, a charming little place.

The next train was due to arrive in 35 minutes. Ilda gave me money to find some cookies or chocolate, so I approached a soldier for information. He gave me chocolate and a large piece of bread, ... for free...

In a great hurry I went through many streets, but there was not anything one could buy.

At some points the town looked a little like Florence, with buildings bordering the blue river, pretty old houses entirely covered with greenery, a large waterfall, and the snowcapped mountains in the distance. When I came back to the station, the train actually arrived. Since Ilda was partly paralysed I carried our luggage to the train. There was a real compartment for us --- what a sensation!! For lunch we ate the chocolate and the bread.

My neighbor, a young man said that we would have to change in Pau and should try to get on the express train. Actually we were not permitted to do so, since we were refugees travelling without paying, but there would be hardly anyone who would check it.

It worked out, and we caught one express after another. Ilda got sick with the effort of making so many changes, but I blossomed.

At 9:00 pm we arrived in Toulouse where we took a porter together with an officer. However, the place where they kept the luggage was closed and we had to remain with our belongings at the station. The lucky officer went to eat in a restaurant. I bought for us a bottle of wine. I had some bread left and Ilda ate a few hard boiled eggs and fruit which we shared while sitting on our luggage, waiting..

Around midnight the train to Marseilles arrived and we were lucky to find a place where we could even sleep. It was very crowded but I did not care. I decided to get out in Marseilles where I wanted to go to the American Express asking them to call their branch in Nice to inquire if they had received any money for me.

Ilda had the intention to travel from Marseilles via Aix Les Bains to Les Milles where her partner was in a camp. We separated at the railroad station.

Once in Marseilles I walked full of hope to the American Express. I was surprised to find only a tiny shop where one man did everything. Proudly I showed him my cable from New York, telling him how urgent it was for me to know if money had arrived for me in Nice. He promised to telephone their branch at 11:30.

I returned to the railroad station where Ilda was about to leave. Then I talked to one of the men in the dispatcher's office, who invited me for lunch which I gladly accepted. When I returned to the American Express office the man happened to be on the phone with their branch in Nice and was told that there was nothing for "Madame Berel." NO?? ----- no error possible.....NO? Suddenly everything in me broke down. Once outside I leaned against a wall and wept in despair --- what now? Since the fellow invited me for lunch I went back to the railroad station. But he did not come. ~~OK~~, --- no food, it did not matter anymore. So I walked along the street thinking of going to a rabbi, but where is a synagogue in Marseilles? I entered Cook's Travel but they told me coldly to go upstairs. Endlessly I waited with tears streaming down my face and felt like passing out. But then someone pitied me and wrote the address of the synagogue, which seemed to be quite far. But I went anyway. Feeling hot, hungry and completely devastated I rang the bell of the ~~s~~ynagogue. A boy opened the door saying only: "Three o'clock.." and closed it again. However, I noticed another door with a sign that the "Great Rabbi" was available daily from 2-3 at a different address.

Assuming I would find an apartment where the rabbi lived or where he would have his office, I came to a courtyard of a narrow, filthy street where a room was filled to capacity with people who were sitting or lying on wooden benches. The rabbi was not there but - so I was told - he might come, perhaps later in the evening. One man asked me what I wanted but he looked so unappetizingly dirty and fresh in behavior that I shrunk within myself and said nothing. "Well, if you dont say what you want one cannot help you", he said in Yiddish. However, there was someone else who tried to convince me that the rabbi would not help anyone, and that it was useless to wait for him. He suggested that I see the manager, who might be of help, and I accepted his proposal. He then accompanied me, but we could not find the manager's house. In the meantime I told this young man my entire dilemma. But why was I so desperately unhappy and helpless? If anyone from the camp would have been with me, they would have told me what to do: OK you wanted to go to Mrs. I. and this is what you should do now. The money which will arrive in Nice can easily be transferred to another address. But I felt as if I had lost my trust and I was scared of the consequences if I were not to receive any money.

I fantasized that I may never be able to leave Aix and the young man who was with me did not understand my anxiety. However, talking to him brought me to the decision to take the train to Aix and to go to Mrs. I. When he took me back to that filthy room it did appear as a kind of temple with some cheap and dirty looking religious paraphernalia. One man prayed out loud another slept on a wooden bench, two women had a conversation, and another powdered her face. It was a home for the homeless.

Even I felt comfortable now, as if it were a home for me while eating a pretzel I had bought for my lunch. Then I tried to get some information about a Jewish committee and the boats from Casablanca to Canada, but was told that the committee's offices were closed and the boats seemed to be only a rumor. But nothing could shake me anymore and I left for Aix.

Arriving at 8:00 pm, feeling sick and miserable, I carried my heavy bag on my shoulders. A man in the street approached to help me with my burden and escorted me to the address my husband indicated in his letters.

However, the villa turned out to be a small hotel in the middle of the town. After a long wait in the lobby a woman finally appeared to tell me that Mrs.I. only came home late in the evening, but I could go across the street where her friends stayed. At the other place the concierge gave me the room number only after many explanations. However, when I entered I saw a nicely set table for dinner, and felt like disappearing into the next mousehole for there sat Mrs.D. a rather snobbish woman with whom I used to share a barrack. She, together with her husband and Mrs.I. were as surprised as I was, but we had to face the rather disconcerting situation. After an uncomfortable moment Mrs.I. suggested I wait downstairs for her. From my husband's letters I had been led to expect that Mrs.I. lived in a villa and not in a shabby hotel where she was only a boarder. Clearly there was no room here for me, and I was determined to leave immediately for Nice. It was a complete riddle to me what I should do in Nice or how I would be able to live without any money. But I knew I could not remain here. I was lucky that only an hour later I had a train.

Mrs. I. was very kind and we both suspected that at least one of our married halves must have suffered a sunstroke! She told me that she worked for her friends since they could afford to pay her a little - the villa was an illusion and so was the capital. She had no job, although she was a professional hairdresser. I felt sorry for her. She then offered me her room to wash myself, which was a tiny place without running water and a window with a view to a staircase. She gave me some chocolate, cheese and bread for the trip, a few Francs for the ticket, and some extra money, cigarettes, and even invited me for a coffee. Together we carried the heavy bag to the railroad station and so now I was on my way into uncertainty.....

Once in the train I ate everything right away. At midnight I arrived in Marseille where I had to wait four hours for the next train to Nice. So I slept on the floor in the waiting room. I didn't care anymore. I felt peaceful, perhaps because circumstances imposed a decision forcing me to find a way to continue life -

At four in the morning, I boarded the local train to Nice and fell asleep again. However, I woke up soon since I felt very hot and looked out the window where I saw a giant cactus. I was at the famous Côte d'Azur!!!

Now I could not sleep anymore, too eager to see it all. Then some soldiers came into my compartment and offered me fresh picked grapes from a large package wrapped in newspaper. When they saw my delight they left me the whole package. At eight in the morning I was in Toulon where there was a pretty little garden at the railroad station with many flowers in all colors, palmtrees, and flowering oleander trees. The sun was out and it was warm. Some soldiers took care of my bag, another had a shave at the garden fence and many black people in red caps were roaming about, which was all very cheerful.

At ten o'clock the next train arrived and then I saw the beautiful Mediterranean with the rust red rocks on the other side and cactuses everywhere, giant cactuses and more cactuses. At that moment I somehow had the sentimental feeling that all my life I had waited to be at the Côte d'Azur, but under different circumstances: Only a few months ago "my American" wanted to fly with me to Marseille and travel in a rented car along the same road which I now saw while sitting in a dirty local train with unknown soldiers. How strange is life.....

For lunch I ate all the wonderful grapes since I had nothing else, but it filled me well.

At two o'clock in the afternoon I arrived in Nice and brought my bag to the place where they kept the luggage. It was Sunday.

For the past two days and nights I had been travelling. My feet were badly swollen and on my leg I had a bad sore which burned. I was filthy, very hot, and tired to death. Since my good friend "Starlet" from the camp lived with her wealthy relatives in Nice, I hoped that I might be able to sleep there for at least one night. When I came to her place she wore an ugly grey bathing suit and seemed happy to see me. She immediately asked for bread and a drink for me while urging me to go with her to the beach. She had a million questions and complained about the poor relationship she had with her family. She could not understand why they got upset when she asked for money to go the hairdresser to get a manicure. I could not stay with her, but she gave me Hedi's address. Hedi had taken a large furnished room and was looking for someone to share the expenses. This was a possibility, but she would probably refuse me since I had no money.

"Starlet" was eager to go to the beach and I felt a bit disappointed. Since I could not walk anymore, I took the trolley car to Hedi, who lived on the other side of town. It was the private home of an elderly Jewish woman.

As I needed to lie down and rest, she let me go to Hedi's room even though she was out. She listened to the misunderstanding I had with Mrs. I. on account of my husband's advice and then brought me a chicken soup with potatoes, which made me feel as if I were at home.

When she left I fell asleep, but woke up when some perfumed hair tenderly carressed my face. It was Hedi - For her there was no question that I could stay with her. Naturally!

She was together with a young man who invited me to go with them to the movies, but I was too tired. Hedi went with him to the railroad station to get my bag, which delighted me. Then I unpacked everything I had, washed myself, and for the first time in three months slept in a bed. It was a beautiful wide bed with white, immaculately clean linen. What a wonderful feeling, but I was sick fearing that I may not receive any money from America...

The next morning, walking freely to the American Express under the glorious blue sky with the many strange flowers and palmtrees aroused an unusual sensation in me. Then to my great surprise, the American Express had the money for me.... It arrived just two hours ago!!!!

Drunk with excitement, I went to sit down on a bench next to the sea, silently begging forgiveness to "my American" on whom I had secretly heaped reproaches. However, the reaction came quickly -- I had to run to the toilet.

Opposite was the elegant Savoy Hotel where I could go to save myself - diarrhea!

I ordered a mint tea but in the next half hour I had to run several times.

For lunch I had a date with the cashier from the American Express. Thus, for the first time in three months I sat at a real table and everything tasted delicious. But my ribs hurt me, probably from carrying the bag for three days, and I could hardly move my arms. Suddenly everything was aching, but I would not give in since I still had to go to the police station to arrange my papers. In any case my condition did not permit me to entertain a flirt.

Moreover, the police station seemed to be far away, it was very hot and I continued to have diarrhea. Nevertheless, I was thrilled with the money and having eaten some good food, full of admiration for the marvellous blue sky in spite of feeling worn out.

There was an endlessly long line at the police station and I thought it impossible to stand that long. Next to it was the Palace of Justice where they told me to go. But suddenly I felt very cold and realized I had a high fever. But then a policeman sent me somewhere else again.

While wandering through many streets I felt completely at the end of my strength but was determined to get my papers in order. Only then could I be sick, stay in bed, sleep and eat.

So I arrived at the next place and I was lucky to find a nice man who interviewed me for about an hour and then accompanied me to his chief.

He again sent me to someone else, who was supposed to give me a paper which would clarify my status. Although I was terribly sick, on meeting this official I was suddenly strangely aware that this was a nasty fellow and I would have to watch out.

When he handed me the paper to bring to someone else, I went to the courtyard first to read it.

This is what it said:

"Marianne Berel, born Marianne Schiff who is in possession of an expulsion, had been arrested in the street, thus an offense without authorization."

I was beyond myself - what an insult!!

While I was thinking what I could do, I remembered that nice man who had interviewed me before, and went back to him. But he was busy and I had to wait an eternity. Again I had to run to the toilet and then I began to weep, feeling frightfully sick. Finally someone offered me a chair -

My inspector came out and I handed him this paper without saying a word. But he understood, tore it up, and I received a "normal" paper.

Although this was by no means a regular permission to remain in Nice, I could now let myself go to be sick. It took three days before the fever subsided, I did not eat much and got very thin.

When I tried again at the police station they allowed me to stay in Nice for five days.

After living in France for seven years I still did not understand the diverse functions of the various police offices, nor did anyone else seem to understand them. In the meantime I went to the hairdresser, paid my various debts, cabled "my American", mailed money to my husband, and wrote to friends.

One evening Hedi took me along to be with her friends. However, I felt out of place. A few days later a birthday party was planned but I did not go.

Hedi was forever singing the first few bars of "In einer Liebeslaube..." (in a love cottage) which made me nervous. Constantly she gazed at herself in the mirror - when she smoked, when she talked, before leaving, and when she came home. Meanwhile I continued with diarrhea and, on the recommendation of the American Express office, visited a doctor, who was very helpful.

Moreover, I also had a strange rash on my feet and the lower part of my legs itched so much that I woke up at night. Our landlady had a huge tom cat with its own toilet filled with sawdust and swarming with flies. I killed about ten of them daily.- It was disgusting.

Hedi got up early in the morning, while I wanted to sleep. She returned late when I slept already and then we talked. We left the window open at night, although the tramway stopped next to our house, disturbing my sleep.

Moreover, I felt utterly miserable concerning my permit to remain in Nice. But one day --- luck was with me. In the middle of a crowd in the street I suddenly heard the familiar voice of the nice inspector at the police station some weeks ago. He recognized me and, after we talked briefly, arranged to meet again for a drink. Thanks to this coincidence I still maintained the permission to reside in Nice.

Then, out of the blue I met Ilda in a coffeehouse! Great joy and immediately we fixed an appointment. Since I had no kitchen at my disposal I found a ~~nice~~ restaurant which was not far from where Ilda lived. One time we went to Cannes, but it was not very pleasant since all stores were closed, giving the impression of a dead city.

Then I was sick again with a high fever when the great event happened: The American Visa!

I simply received a letter from the American Consulate. Obviously "my American" had taken care of all possible difficulties and I had nothing else to do but cope with my French exit and Spanish transit visa which turned out to be rather problematic. Nevertheless I was in seventh heaven....

Suddenly all aliens were told that they would have to return to the concentration camp, causing endless nightmares, dreams, and hopes. However, Paul, the nice inspector continued to encourage me since he was convinced that I would get my exit visa next week. There seemed to be always another possibility, next week and then the next week.....

Now came Medi's birthday and she celebrated it on two evenings, managing all with little money, a "borrowed" room from her landlady, a record player with dancing and the like. But again, I ~~did~~ not like her friends for there was something I did not understand in their behavior and felt left out.

Another morning while brushing my teeth I suddenly felt nauseous and thought I will have to throw up, but passed out and woke up hours later on the floor bathed in sweat. The doctor came, my rib was bruised but not broken and there were red carnations from Paul.

Often I went to a movie - alone - in fact I was alone most of the time. Once I took a seat next to a lady while stepping on her dog for which I apologized, we exchanged a few words and I noticed her Russian accent. She complained about the food situation and so I recommended my restaurant where consequently we met many times. She was nice, with snow white hair, beautiful blue eyes and splendid teeth.

One day she invited me to come to her hotel for a bridge party. Among her guests would be a "serious" gentleman from Vienna who played in tournaments. Although I do not play bridge, I understand the game when I see it. I was surprised to observe this man who played it like the music of Bach: clear, decisive and without any ado, which I liked very much. But I left the party before it was over. The next day he appeared with the Russian lady at our restaurant. Since he came from Vienna I asked him about Professor Schiff who was one of my father's relative. He happened to be this man's godfather!

In Paris he worked in a shop with fine leather goods, a job which he had arranged in order to be able to live in Paris - and I sold belts from the Haute Couture. Thus, we had found some common points of interest. Afterwards we went for coffee on a beautiful terrace and I told him about my plan to go to America and the concentration camp. We arranged to see each other again but agreed to leave a note at his hotel in case something unforeseen might happen.

Finally the Vichy Government returned my folder, without the exit permit but with the recommendation to go to the Swedish Consulate in Marseille to get a German passport, although I had attached the document to have lost my citizenship. It was revolting - So I went to Marseille which was useless, expensive and very cold. "My American" cabled the address of an English woman in Marseille who might be able to help me, but she could not do so. When I returned to Nice I had the feeling of coming "home." Marseille was a horrible town. Life remained an endless "dance." Confronted with all these problems Hedi told me about forged papers and for approximately Frs. 5.000 I could get a passport, but I did not like the idea. A red haired fellow came to tell us extraordinary things, returned the next day with a French girlfriend Hedi knew and, while we were sitting all together, gave Hedi Frs. 10.000 for which she was supposed to supply forged papers. However, she did not trust him.

A few days later at eight o'clock in the morning the police came to look through our things, even reading all our letters. Hedi and I were taken to the police station where I noticed Hedi's friends, reminding me of their forged passports and making me suspicious of the situation. All day we had one cross examination after another, but when they threatened us that we would be kept overnight, I pretended to pass out. They transported me home immediately since Hedi, as a medical student dramatized my condition. Recently Hedi had been running out of money and I had been paying the full rent. It was the Fall now and the cold water in the bathroom had begun to bother me, so I went to the bath house where I had my first hot bath in five months - It was delightful. After the ordeal at the police station, I returned to the bath house while passing my new friend's hotel, leaving him a note.

Later, in the evening Hedi and I discussed the events and agreed that most probably the red haired character had been a detective. Although I was sorry to leave Hedi, I came to the decision to move out for I was determined not to get mixed up with the police anymore than was necessary. When I saw my new friend the next day he was also in favor of departing from Hedi and her friends.

Actually the price of my new friend's hotel was not much more than I paid now. Moreover, the hotel had a nice lobby where I might meet some people and would not have to go to the movies so often. I moved the same day and with it began another chapter of my life in Nice.

*** v *****

Once I had arranged my few belongings at the hotel I went to bed, for I did not feel well. The next evening I had a dinner appointment with someone from the American Express when suddenly I had a high fever again.

Ilda just returned from Marseille since she was unable to get a permit anywhere else either. To our surprise the police in Nice now gave her a permit for two months after she had been absent for many weeks. We were swimming completely in the air ... My new friend was originally classified as an Aryan (only his mother was Jewish), so he was officially under German protection. One of his friends married to a Jewish woman was picked up by the police but when his wife called the German Commission in Marseille he was released. Nobody was sure what was going to happen. More or less we were all waiting for visas to go across the ocean. And then came Christmas 1940.....

Although my new friend was constantly involved with playing bridge there was enough time to enjoy each other's company. Trained as an accountant he became the president of the largest business of credit rating in Europe. I did not have to worry about getting food anymore. He always "found" something on the black market. He was not married and our relationship grew into the unexpected feeling of wanting to marry each other. He was a man who always kept his promise, there was never a doubt or anxiety between us. He said what I thought and he knew what I needed. However, while discussing this subject in all earnest, we both had to realize that, under the circumstances, it was impossible for me to get a divorce.

New Year's evening we celebrated with wine from Algeria, an entire collection of sample bottles with liqueurs. A few minutes before midnight, he brought a bottle of champagne leading me to instantaneous, profound sleep.

With this sentence I ended the letters to my mother written as a diary..

It was 1941: the year of hope for millions had begun.

A few weeks later I received my exit visa and left Nice in February, rather distressed at the thought of bidding good-bye to my precious friend who I might never see again.

Moreover, it was also a farewell to Europe, to everything I ever knew or possessed. Years before, when I had left home to live in Paris with my husband, it was the only time I saw my father weeping. However, for me this was an adventure for I was convinced that a ridiculous individual such as Hitler could not possibly succeed against a world as I had known it.

But now everything was different. Home, the way I knew it, had been utterly destroyed. My father hung himself on my mother's birthday, an expression of utter despair. Although I felt numb under the weight of so many things storming in my mind, I was trying to face the different circumstances while staring at the beautiful Mediterranean changing its colors from an intense aqua into emerald green. But gradually I began to enjoy the idea that, in spite of all odds, the plan to go to America had now become a reality and that I stood at the threshold of a new life.

A girl I knew from Gurs expected me in Perpignan, where I spent the night. The next day I travelled with a pretty woman in my compartment who was the wife of an American diplomat, accompanied by a diplomatic courier.

My next goal was Port Bou, the Spanish frontier, where I was to pick up money "my American" had mailed to a Bank. But the Bank was closed until four o'clock. Since I had to catch my train to Barcelona, I was at a loss of how to proceed to get my money. So I went for a drink in a bar where I happened to meet a man who worked at the Bank offering me his help, for he had the key. He accompanied me through many long, dark and dusty corridors leading to a room where the director sat at a desk. It did not take him long to understand my situation and I left the Bank with my money.

After losing endless hours in a local train between Perpignan and the Spanish frontier, we now had an express to Barcelona. Although I was not permitted to make any stopovers with a transit visa, I joined my companions to spend a day in Barcelona at the Hotel Ritz. The diplomat's wife invited me to go with her to a bullfight which I declined for fear of being discovered by the police, nor was I any too keen to see animals being killed.

The next day I took the train from Barcelona via Madrid to Vigo (which is about 850 miles) where I would find the boat and the reservation for my trip to the States.

I have no recollection of this journey except that it seemed awfully long and monotonous. Moreover, I had miscalculated the expenses of staying at the Ritz, and had no money left for food. I could have bought something, but on this train only a dining car was available which was beyond my means.

It was embarrassing because the waiter constantly came to tell me that dinner was being served. In spite of his poor French, his curiosity and my hunger finally brought us to the point of making a conversation. For a waiter in Spain, a young foreign woman alone in a first class compartment on such a long trip seemed suspicious, and I was rather uneasy being without money and no valid papers in a country whose language I did not know. The only consolation was that once in Vigo I would have money again, but that would take many more hours.

Suddenly the waiter appeared with a tray of food which I was reluctant to accept, fearing that he might expect something in return.

Moreover, it was dark, I was alone, the train seemed empty. Yet I was very hungry, so I ate. The waiter sat opposite, staring in disbelief

when I told him of my situation and of what was going on in France as well as in Germany.

When I came to Vigo the little town was in an uproar about a violent storm which had taken place the previous day, interrupting all communications. This meant that the money from "my American" was not yet available for me.

The Hotel manager was not too happy about my explanations, nor could he say at what time I might be able to get my money. But showing him my first class ticket to America, he tolerated my presence.

While going to the boat office I admired the colorful camelia trees lining the streets on both sides exuding an incredible perfume. In my hometown a camellia was a luxury since it had to be grown in a hothouse. But when my husband was my finacé, he was a rich man's son and provided me almost weekly with a fresh camellia for my "buttonhole," which was considered to be extravagant.

At the boat office I was told that no accommodation was available for me since I had a first class ticket and I would have to wait awhile. Since they could not specify whether the waiting period might be days or perhaps weeks, it occurred to me to ask

if they had space in the tourist class, which they did. This meant going to the boat that night and leaving the next day, but I was permitted to eat in the first class dining room. I was glad to have that chance, escaping the rather uneasy situation at the hotel.

The boat was a small vessel and the tourist class was for double occupancy in a place which looked more like a machine room with lots of big warm pipes on which large rats moved about. There was a sickening smell of oil.

My companion was a nice middle-aged woman who tried her best to comfort me.

The next morning I went to the first class dining room where a single man had his breakfast, because the first class passengers were only embarking later today. Since I did not like to sit alone, I reluctantly placed myself at his table. He spoke a fluent French and appeared eager to know if I liked the food. When I told him I had a first class ticket but consented to accept a tourist class placement he looked concerned, asking me to show him my ticket. Suddenly he urged me to eat a little faster and to come with him,

Always ready for surprises, I followed him through many corridors, arriving at the captain's office which was beleaguered with people.

As if he were someone with authority he disregarded the crowd while opening the door and pulled me along into the captain's office. There was a passionate exchange in Spanish of which I understood nothing. But at the end I knew that the man at the breakfast table not only owned this ship but a few others as well, guaranteeing me a first class cabin in Lisbon the next day.

We left in the afternoon and at dinner time I was placed at a table with eleven young men of whom only one spoke a fluent French. Some were from Spain but most of them were from South America going home, more or less fleeing the war. The one who spoke a fluent French was a delegate from the Franco Government and in charge of some newly discovered oil fields for which he was seeking money for development in the United States.

Since I did not speak any Spanish, my social life on this trip seemed to depend on this man's kindness to translate most of the conversations.

I do not remember any German speaking refugees in the first class, but I met some on deck later on. When it was time to go to bed I was deadly seasick, dreading to repeat the experience of the previous night's sleep in the ship's belly with the nauseating smell and the company of rats.

Conforming with Spanish tradition men were proud to exercise their education as "caballeros"; and Franco's delegate seeing me in such a deplorable state urged me to use his cabin. Feeling so ill I gladly accepted and he sat all night next to me while trying to help me in my agony.

Once in Lisbon I felt better and I was able to move into the first class cabin as promised by the ship's owner. However, once out at sea again I got so sick that my companions asked the ship's doctor to help me.

I do not know how long it took me to tolerate seeing the horizon above, but gradually I recovered. We were heading towards Cuba and, since it was March, spring was in full fling with a golden sun and warm nights. There was nothing to do on that small boat except talk, eat and sleep.

However, being with so many young men in a time of political development, we had interesting discussions which actually influenced my entire future.

Thus, we all agreed that English would be the most important language and that Spanish would probably replace French. All agreed that I should learn Spanish, which I thought was a bit of a far fetched idea. After all, it was English which I should learn, since I was going to live in America for an undetermined amount of time. However, the group persisted with the argument, that I would

learn English anyway, since I would be living in America, but I would need the initiative to learn Spanish.

Little did I foresee that learning Spanish was going to save my life ten years later, when I found a physician in Cuba who diagnosed correctly a life-threatening illness. (a tumor in the spinal cord). Moreover, by learning Spanish I not only found many good friends but also the man with whom I shared a profound love relationship until his death.

Upon getting closer to Havana the sea became calmer and I got used to the shaking vessel. One day the captain gave a special party on deck for the first class passengers, requiring a dinner jacket for men and evening dress for women. Since everything I possessed, including my evening clothes, was left in Paris, my companions approached the pregnant wife of an Argentinian journalist. She gladly consented to lend me her evening dress, an all black garment fitting me like a glove. There was a man from Vienna who, as a kind of investment, had bought a huge shawl in eggshell silk with long fringes and handpainted ivory figures sewn all over. He draped it over the skinny black dress for me and, under a moonlit sky, I greeted the other side of the globe with champagne and optimism while dancing all night.

A few days later we docked in Havana, where we could go to town. With neither a passport nor a visa I was scared to leave the ship, but my companions convinced me that I had nothing to fear. So I gambled. By making a circular formation with me in the middle, the boys smuggled me through all securities. The detectives on either side were busy checking the papers of my friends and never even detected me.

We swarmed through the luxurious palm-lined avenues as well as side streets, landing in a somewhat doubtful place where we saw a magnificent dancer whose "partner" was a large man's handkerchief of which the corners were knotted together. In a most virtuoso way she played the castanets while communicating a gamut of emotions to her "partner". We had been on that boat for two weeks and it was time to think of the end: New York.

We were still discussing politics, drinking and eating together, while time and time again the group reminded me of the importance of learning Spanish. I don't know if we landed in New York on schedule, but I remember that it took three weeks to arrive at an unearthly hour.

There stood "my American" at the exit waiting to receive me ...

I was not as surprised as I should have been, but in some way I took it for granted. His pockets seemed to be filled with dollar bills and, without waiting in any line, he shoved me into a taxi and we were off. That all this was illegal I only knew a long time later --

Rather excited, confused and freezing, I was fighting with the physical sensation of being on land again, something which I did not expect. Nevertheless, I noticed the many ugly houses, the absence of trees, and when "my American" proudly indicated the famous Park Avenue as the most beautiful street in New York, I thought of the magnificent Champs Elysée and felt like crying.

But then we arrived at the St. Moritz Hotel where a large bowl of red roses greeted me in a luxurious suite.

I was stunned, not only because I was finally in New York, but it seemed to impose a role on me which I felt unable to fulfill.

Moreover, it reminded me of Madame G. in Gurs whose interest as well as "income" derived from her laying cards to tell the future. She always insisted that I would go overseas and that I would be received with red roses. Here they were.....

Was I happy? -- No, I was not, since my situation required some definite changes. Living in a luxury hotel with expenses paid by a married man was not in my calculations, however vague they were, and I knew I had to think quickly of how to bring about some changes which might lead to an adjustment .

"In this world there are only two tragedies.
One is not getting what one wants, and the other
is getting it."

Oscar Wilde

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THE TIME OF ADJUSTMENT

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

So here I was. I had saved my life, escaped the war and came to the man I trusted.

Yet, I felt as if I were at the bottom of the scale again. Since I lived in Paris with my husband for many years, it had become my second home.

Speaking French almost like natives, we had acquired some friends and established a household, however modest.

But now I was alone, without any legal documents nothing to do, and stripped of everything I ever had. I realized that I was utterly dependent on one man's whim, a man who was married, of a different culture, and a different generation.

In my drive for independence my first decision was to find a place to live and my lion (as I called "my American" now, since he was born in August) seemed relieved that I wanted to leave the luxury hotel so soon. Thus, we drove around different neighborhoods looking for something, when we happened to come to a narrow street with little houses which delighted me. "There is a tree", I exclaimed from a distance - "let's go to the tree".

Indeed the tree stood in front of a small residential hotel where I was to live for many years.

There were carpeted stairs reminding me of the small place I had in Paris and I got a pleasantly furnished room with a nice bathroom and a kitchenette which was everything I could wish.

According to my calender of 1941 I began my days in New York with shopping and as many appointments as I could arrange. Moreover, influenced by the discussions I had on the boat with my companions about learning Spanish, I found a French speaking pianist from Spain who, also stranded in New York on account of the war, consented to teach me.

Concerned with reestablishing family ties my mother wrote the addresses of relatives in New York, urging me to get in touch with them, which I did.

But I felt a sense of strangeness with these relatives, who looked at me with "peculiar " eyes. Instead of being proud of having achieved my rescue, I was ill at ease.

However, being dressed in fashionable clothes, wearing a gold watch studded with rubies and diamonds, it was only natural that people would think of me as someone I refused to be, although I had to admit that all I had was paid for by one man. On the other hand I fought these uncomfortable feelings with the recognition that certain rules had presently lost

their value and that I had to live according to my present needs

and so the hell with all of them.....

The only person who understood was my mother who wrote me:

"regardless of the circumstances my darling, you live and you are safe".

It goes without saying that this man I called "my lion" (his name was actually "Charlie") thoroughly enjoyed taking me to swanky places while being delighted with my enthusiasm. However, after three months time he more often left me alone.

The summer was the high season for his business and air condition still unknown at that time and, being over sixty, he probably needed a rest at home.

Too ignorant to understand this behavior I began to feel rather anxious, doubting his affection and on the verge of losing my trust in him. Thus, in May, only two months after my arrival, I wrote to my mother:

"Where do I find support and consolation? Within myself everything is torn and splintered with so many complications. I thought to hold happiness in my hands, but it was an illusion. No matter how one looks at life, it is wrong, even when one believes not to have any feelings left, one nevertheless seems to find the strength to suffer again."

Whereupon my mother answered:

"Happiness is a disposition. Out of selfishness I am a philosopher. I want to see and feel the good things. To look down and be humble, at the same time to strive upwards concerning character formation and knowledge in many directions."

Although Charlie paid for everything I needed, sending frequently precious flowers and buying me little presents, I never had any cash. The most I had was five dollars. I realized that I was fond of him, but also knew that I had to re-establish my independence. Since he agreed to this he surprised me one day by arranging a job as a salesgirl for me. It was a little retail shop across from a Swedish restaurant where we often met. Since he did not take my job seriously, he took me for as long a lunch as he liked, making me late for the afternoon work. This interfered with the store's lunchtime policy and I was dismissed.

At that time it appears as if I lived "two lives": I tried to be what was expected of me, to enjoy all the fabulous entertainments and to be grateful for being saved. On the other hand I wrote in my diary about feeling burdened by everything, being in a fog. There was no news from my husband nor from former friends. Horrid stories about concentration camps came to my attention and I felt uneasy being the girlfriend of a well to do older man, desperately trying to find my peace of mind in the library.

However, my mother reminded me to continue to find a "Glücksbasis" (a basic happiness) and to look at the stars and to bow before the "ALL--The Unknown."

Thus, I struggled with something I had never experienced: a seemingly endless loneliness. Although I was in contact with some friends and family members who occasionally invited me for dinner, the feelings of anxiety, alone in a furnished place, particularly on weekends made me wretched. Speculations about the future grew into a dreadful nightmare.

"Why was I saved?" was a frequent thought and the only answer I could find was to bring happiness to the man who saved me, although he did not give the impression of needing me.

No, I did not come to America to stay here - I had my husband and my family in Europe. My ambition was to become a musician-only circumstances had broken everything into pieces.

But time went on and when fall was in the air, Charlie bought a new Lincoln with plans to drive with me to Florida for Christmas. He suggested that I get my driver's license, which I did. On Sunday, December 7th while waiting in his car for a traffic light to change, the news

about Pearl Harbor was flashed in lights across Times Square.

"That means war kiddo" Charlie exclaimed. But a war with Japan did not impress me since it was too far from all I knew. I failed to recognize that since Japan was an ally of Germany, this also meant a war against the Nazis.

Unconcerned about the news, we drove leisurely south, full^{of} admiration for the pointsettias, the mossy trees, and the delightful Spanish touch around St. Augustine. We were in Daytona Beach Christmas eve where it was warm and the stars blinked in a velvety black sky.

The Miami Water was too cold for swimming, besides it was too "citified" for my taste. After a week we returned to New York.

When Charlie finally recognized my difficulties in finding a job, he agreed to let me work in his factory, where I was assigned to help the models change their gowns. The salesman seemed to resent my presence. Perhaps fearing possible competition and, among the numerous German dressmakers, I generated hidden anti-semitism for being a Jewish refugee.

Thus, Charlie felt obliged to let me go after a short time. This distressed me deeply, for I was far from understanding that my appearance might have caused Charlie an embarrassment.

However, soon after we had some buyers from Cuba which seemed a turning point, for the ability to speak sufficient Spanish to entertain these customers reconnected me again with Charlie's work. Furthermore, he received an order for a gown requiring an enormous amount of trimming, a task which I could handle easily, thus saving him some money he would have to pay to a finisher and my return to Charlie's factory seemed more justified.

Moreover, since Pearl Harbor the market had changed drastically with the establishment of the US War Production Board (L85 directive 2) in which women's clothes were dealt severe blows, such as banishing full skirts, knife pleats and the likes.

Manufacturers were obliged to use synthetic fabrics called "victory fabrics," and long evening gowns such as were produced at Charlie's factory, vanished.

Charlie's label was well known to carry one of the finest gowns which he imported from Europe to copy them for the American market.

But general uncertainty, government restrictions and shortages of goods obliged him now to cut his staff and move to a smaller place.

Having his full confidence I became in time more or less the "Jack of all trades" which gratified me. Unfortunately, what these conditions meant for Charlie escaped me entirely, for I was too involved in my own anxieties and depressions. Without family and being out of touch with my husband, as well as former friends, I felt entirely abandoned. When I suddenly received a poem my husband mailed me from a concentration camp in Africa, it evoked our past happiness which made me cry. Having been with him since my teens, he simply was part of my life, although we parted like strangers when we last saw each other. However, this poem generated again a glimpse of hope for the future.

"In wooden barracks I cannot build castles in the air,
and barbed wire, which is hard and tight,
I cannot cut with a single word of love.
But in the evening when palmtrees move
and darkness is around us as it is in peacetime -
then I feel that you are with me."
(translated)

Since I had plenty of time in my lonely existence
I persisted in studying Spanish and, after trying
a few teachers, I found Melida, a student from
Panama. She lived at the International House where
for many years we met every Friday for a lesson.
We had a wonderful time with its lively social
life, frequent lectures and interesting people.
Furthermore, the French University had become
my neighbor where I could attend lectures free of
charge in psychology and anthropology.
I would have been satisfied with this transitional
lifestyle except for the fact that Charlie
seemed to neglect me. There was a rift for which
I had no explanation but the fear that our
relationship might break drove me to immense
sadness and anxieties.

I did not realize that he (like most Americans) did not save for his later years as was customary in Europe, but lived well with the money he made. However, now, as an older man, he must have felt threatened with a possible bankruptcy due to the implications of warlike conditions.

Moreover, since we were now working together time spent outside the office became a rarity. Thus, the time we used to go out together was now a void. He also got into the habit of not coming when he said he would thereby destroying my trust while producing an anger I had great difficulty in overcoming.

With only a payphone three flights down at my disposal and not having many friends, I usually fell into an abyss of loneliness which drove me to feelings I prefer not to remember.

Who was this man I loved almost more than my own father? What brought him to the point of spending his time, energy, and money for me?

Was his curiosity aroused by seeing me alone in a hotel lobby in Paris trying to sell belts?

After a buyer introduced us, he invited me for a lunch the next day. This was a ray of sunshine for me and, despite my rather limited knowledge of English, I took this opportunity to describe the disaster that not only had befallen my family, but the entire Jewish population in Germany. Shocked by the things I told him, he might have felt compelled to do something on his own. He told me that he had just come from Rome going there for sheer adventure to see the Pope (Pius XII) where he mingled with the crowd and happened to be at a place where the Pope passed and blessed him. When he reported this he stressed that, although being a Protestant and not religious, he felt touched, as if "life had chosen him to do a good deed."

Those were the very words he used, which I distinctly remember, but did not mean anything to me then.

Only years later, when people asked me about my rescue, did it occur to me that perhaps this casual gesture of the Pope motivated him into action.

Charlie was born in 1878 and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio as the son of German Protestant immigrants. Since he appeared to be untouched by antisemitism,

he might have considered me to be a kind of "Landsmann," an expression he liked to use. For him, America was the land of freedom, of plenty, of possibilities and a haven for the oppressed. He loved America -

After he finished college, he got into the garment business. When I met him in Paris he was in his 60's, married a second time with a son in college.

He specialized in manufacturing exclusive debutante and evening gowns thinking (as he said) that mothers are inclined to spend more money to bring out their daughters than when they got married. At least twice a year he used to travel to Europe, visiting the centers of the Haute Couture to buy extravagant originals, French laces, Italian silks, and Swiss tulle, which he then presented to his customers in his elegant showroom in New York.

To adjust these gowns for the American market they had to be modified in their lavishness. To do this successfully for his elite customers such as Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, or Magin, he had to have the expertise to do so.

Charlie had a comfortable life, Immaculately

clean in rather elegant but discrete clothes, standing 5'10 with clear blue eyes and thick blond hair he made a good impression. He enjoyed spending money yet he put some money aside for something special.

While together in a taxi going to the place where I was to be interned, he held my hand tightly, while his eyes got moist, desperately wailing: "All my life I saved money for an important deed and yet now I am helpless."

Before leaving Paris for New York he came to see me at the internment place promising with a strong voice: "I am going to fight now - dont you worry.." That he actually came to this God forsaken place where 8.000 women were crammed together under deplorable conditions made this statement deepened my confidence in him which greatly comforted me in the future.

But then "life" closed the door between us for I was obliged to travel with thousands of others to the camp of Gurs in the Pyrénées.

It took more than six weeks before he received the message of my whereabouts via a distant uncle. It was by sheer intuition, that my mother wrote me this uncle's address, which reconnected me with him.

In my rather youthful optimism I decided to leave this camp by September 1st, regardless of the circumstances. Therefore I indicated in my letter the American Express in Nice as my next address.

Once Charlie knew this, he mailed me some money through a manufacturer in Switzerland for it was not permitted anymore to mail money from the States to France. The cable in which Charlie confirmed to have mailed me some money was the proof I needed to get the permission to leave the camp and to travel to Nice.

To get an American visa in 1940 was in itself a miracle, for the quota was officially closed.

Nevertheless, some people knew that Roosevelt had established a "President's Advisory Committee" which more or less manipulated to help some "very special people" to leave Europe.

Fortunately Charlie found a lawyer who got him in touch with this committee which facilitated the procedure to get me to the States.

But since he reserved a ticket for me on a Spanish boat, I also needed a Spanish transit visa which was quite impossible to get as a married woman without legal papers.



Charlie told me that he invited the Spanish Consul for a lunch at the Plaza which led to my obtaining the needed transit visa.

However, the most difficult part was to receive the French exit visa in time, so the other visas would not have expired. Many committed suicide in this "game" since the French Government in Vichy frequently delayed the exit visas sometimes for months. Since all visas had a deadline, it actually was an act of fate whether or not one could leave.

It goes without saying that Charlie enjoyed his triumph that, despite all odds, he had succeeded to get me safely to the States.

It was only a few days before we met that Charlie returned from Rome where his feelings that "life had chosen him to do a good deed" were triggered through a Pope's casual gesture. Perhaps it was this idea that made him decide to return to Paris for the midseason, this time by taking the "clipper". The sensation of being in a plane over the ocean the first time might have affected his drive to fulfill his vision of having been selected to do a "good deed".

Moreover, the realization of my rather precarious situation may have raised his determination to use his money and connections to help me.

In addition, his concern about my safety and the role he felt assigned to play came even more into focus when he accompanied me and saw hundreds of women standing in line at the building to be interned. Being surrounded by dozens of policemen and screaming insults of French people probably touched him deeply and aroused his concern about my possible fate. With tears in his eyes he pressed my hand and promised in all seriousness to do his best to get me to America.

Once I was in New York he was keen on showing me "his" America:

his car, the finest nightclubs, restaurants, movies, shows and concerts, driving me almost every weekend to a different place such as Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Bear Mountains, the Catskills, Montauk and the like. No matter where we were, he ordered the best food with the finest wines or champagne.

Did he want to spoil me and for what?---
Or did he just try to do what he might have longed to do for many years -- to taste the good life, which he was able to afford now and could not have done previously?

On the other hand, my tumultuous past with a future that was entirely in the dark prevented me from consoling myself with these activities. It was nice, I was grateful, but there were too many unanswered questions disturbing my loneliness for which Charlie seemed to have no understanding.

Thus, the tragedy of Pearl Harbor was "a relief" for me - since I was convinced that the Allies would finally bring an end to these unbelievable atrocities. Consequently I welcomed the war, despite its restrictions, which influenced our relationship .

Since I lived alone he was all I had, a rather different situation than his since he not only had a family and a business, but was also rooted here with all its privileges. Moreover, my suspicion of his changed behavior towards me was confirmed when he suddenly disappeared and left me stranded on New Year's eve, about which

I complained bitterly in a letter to my mother.
So I lived by trying to compromise.

There were still beautiful flowers on certain days, at times he took me for dinner and occasional trips on weekends.

However, I was increasingly unable to continue these endless lonely evenings, holidays, and weekends. Alone in my furnished room with nothing to do, and only a payphone three flights down, no piano, just a little AM radio, I felt the necessity to enlarge my life.

Thus, the acquaintances at the International House, where I had my Spanish lessons with Melida now became my friends whom I would date.

One evening while being in my uncle's beautiful living room overlooking the Hudson someone asked me if I knew that Joseph Schwarz now lived in New York. Upon hearing this name I experienced immediately a profound reaction of a long forgotten time at home where music had been a daily activity.

Joseph Schwarz was a Russian pianist concertizing with his son who played the violin. While in our town he frequently stayed in our apartment and my mother as well as myself had a lesson and his son worked with my sister.

Moreover, he made a transcription for piano of a Bach composition which I studied and liked very much. Knowing this, my mother brought the manuscript to Switzerland where we met one summer and I copied it painstakingly. Now, knowing him to be in New York, it did not take me long to make an appointment with him. He received me with a big smile. When I proudly showed him my handwritten copy, he claimed to have changed it in a few places but he was willing to dictate it to me again. Although I did not have a piano I was delighted to do so.

As it happened he died soon after and his son begged me to give it to him for I was the only one to have it. Luckily the xerox machine was

now on the market which facilitated the copying. When my relatives saw my enthusiasm on finding Joseph Schwarz again, they proposed that I use their piano while they were on vacation. I accepted their offer, but the old excitement was missing. Rather, it felt as if I tried to penetrate a sphere to which I had lost the privilege to entry. Frustrated and disappointed I gave up.

Somewhat later I was invited to a house concert where Youri, a professional cellist, introduced me as a "musician" which, to my surprise, gave me a sense of pride. Reluctantly, I admitted that I no longer played the piano but apparently it did not matter to anyone.

Youri was an older man who seemed interested in getting me back to music. Being a Russian refugee, he saw my problems from a different perspective than myself since his experience of living uprooted had been many years longer. Thus, he tried to convince me that he would facilitate my playing the piano again by giving me free lessons and that for little money he would let me have a small room behind his kitchen where I could put a rented upright.

Since my landlady would not permit me to have a piano, it all seemed perfect and so I began to practice again.

In 1945, when peace was imminent I was still working in Charlie's factory, while enjoying the time with Melida at the International House. To my mother's satisfaction I had established good relationships with family members and I was particularly proud about my renewed ties to music.

Charlie was happy to have survived the war by making wedding dresses and hostess gowns while evening dresses began selling again. Rather eager to return to Europe, Charlie asked an Italian dressmaker to take charge of his business. On the same weekend that Charlie left I went to the beach with a cousin where I made fun of him sitting under an umbrella although there was no sun. However, on our way back I suddenly felt nauseous and very cold.

Monday morning I did not recognize my face in the mirror, which looked like a red apple with eyes sunken in like raisins. Scarcely a second later I passed out and found myself covered with sweat many hours later on the floor.

A doctor diagnosed it as a sunstroke, gave me strong tea, and advised me to stay in bed. When I returned to Charlie's factory the dressmaker in charge as well as the cutter, the

patternmaker, and others - all came to me with questions. Apparently no one had the courage to make decisions and all were glad to rid themselves of their responsibilities. When Charlie returned he praised my efficiency, raising my status to manager and gave me five hundred dollars with the promise that he would give me this sum again when he went on a trip.

Five hundred dollars was a lot of money then, but for me it was more important that I seem to have learned a trade which might give me some independence from Charlie.

Although most people were happy that war came to an end, my joy was somewhat clouded for I was still without legal documents, my husband somewhere in Africa, the "honeymoon" with Charlie deteriorated, and my mother far away. I had never seen my sister's three children and now they were moving to Palestine. My father perished and with him all the insurance policies he had carried for our safety as well as his money, factory and houses which the Nazis obliged him to sell. Breslau, home with all its "trimmings" seemed to have vanished.

Thus, the peace so many welcomed did not bring me any consolation - life broke my future into pieces, stripping me of everything I had..... What to do?

I arrived at the conclusion that I must find the strength to make a compromise and leave the future to destiny.

However, the five hundred dollars that Charlie had given me raised my spirit relieving some of my fears about a possible split.

Like my father, Charlie supplied me only with the money I needed for rent, the dentist, etc , but never any cash.

To most people I appeared to have adjusted to New York, being in perfect health, well dressed, with a good job, able to read, write and speak in four languages, playing the piano and having a few friends.

Some German dressmakers had left and an asthmatic Cuban dressmaker was hired, as well as other Cuban friends of her. This permitted me to practice my Spanish and Charlie was delighted since they worked for less money and better than the Germans.

However, my responsibility as Charlie's manager had grown into enormous proportions, for no bill was paid without my initials, customers frequently called me directly when they needed something special and I needed to constantly calculate the different stages of manufacturing:

having the material in stock in time, getting the dresses cut, sewn, embroidered and so on.

I was in charge of the stockroom ordering the supplies, making out the tickets, checking inventories and distributing the work. Moreover, at times I was also working in the showroom carrying heavy bales of satin which we kept in the stockroom. In the late afternoons I packed these voluminous gowns into boxes the size of coffins, while Charlie made out the bills. Dreading the loneliness of my furnished room I always tried to arrange something, but the realization that time and circumstances had changed that beautiful relationship with Charlie was always with me and weighed like a heavy burden on my mind.

One day someone older than the usual crowd sat at our table at the International House. He had deep blue eyes in an oval shaped face and a heavy gold watchband hung loose on his wrist as if he had lost a lot of weight recently. I felt drawn to him and soon I came to understand his sometimes confusing story told in a strongly accented French.

This was Antonio, with whom I developed a profound friendship which was to endure for forty three years until his death, despite a host of problems, changes and challenges. Like two puzzle pieces we fitted together despite our different backgrounds joining us intuitively. We were both married but without our spouses neither of us spoke a fluent English. French was our second language and neither one of us had legal documents to remain in the States. Theoretically he could have returned to his native Portugal but he felt uprooted because he lived in Africa for the past ten years. Moreover, he profoundly mourned his parents who both had died recently. He had a joint bank account with his wife, who remained with his married sister in Lisbon, but she had taken out all his money. He had an MD from the University of Lisbon, but was washing dishes in the cafeteria of the

International House since this gave him the chance to eat. He felt stranded, lost, lonesome and alone - and so was I.

As the son of a postmaster general Antonio was born in Bragança (Portugal) but he grew up in Lisbon where he went to college and was certified as a "Public Health Officer." Without any specialization Antonio was confronted with the difficult task to find employment for there were not too many hospitals in Portugal.

However, when he married, his father-in-law arranged a job for him at a coffee plantation in Angola. Yet, bored with the colonial life style at that time, he joined a scientist to study gorillas, resulting in a book which was published by the Ministry of Colonies; he also received a grant to visit European Zoos to observe gorillas in captivity.

When his assignment came to an end he accepted a position in the jungle of Mozambique to be in charge of a hospital for the natives.

Although he tried to divert himself by doing some research on tropical diseases and wrote about his travels (both were published) he felt trapped by the lack of possibilities to advance himself.

Furthermore, being deprived of any cultural stimuli in the jungle he wanted to change his life. Thus, it seems that he made some investigation and probably discovered in a medical journal the celebrated ophtalmologist Dr.C. who was the author of the "Atlas of Keratectomy" (the excision of a portion of the cornea) and "Keratoplasty" (plastic surgery of the cornea) working in New York City. With the intense wish to improve himself by learning a specialty, which would better his chances to get a job in a city, he thought of studying with this famous man. Thus, in 1945 when he was free to leave his position he had saved some money to come to the States on a visitors visa.

Being reluctant to undertake such an adventure with his wife, he asked her to remain with his married sister in Lisbon to which she consented. However, totally ignorant of conditions in New York he never realized the amount of time, effort and money it would require to become specialized in such a difficult field as eye surgery. Nor was he aware of the introduction of the GI bill at the end of World War II when American veterans invaded the University including the lectures of the celebrated ophtalmologist.

The recent death of both of his parents plunged him into deep mourning and when he learned that his wife had cleaned out their joint bank account he must have been at the point of desperation. My reaction to his story was somewhat cool, since for years I was too influenced by the many horrors around me. I reasoned that, after all he could return to Portugal and get a job with the government, a precious option which none of us refugees could claim to possess. Yet, the mere idea of going back to Portugal or Africa agitated him, for he wanted to stay in America no matter under what conditions.

About six months after meeting Antonio my mother came on a boat to visit me for which Charlie had paid the fare. Eight years had passed since we last saw each other, years in which we both had lost our home, my father (her husband....), our culture, language, money, friends and so on.

For my mother going on sixty it signified the end of life, while for me a future I was in the process of building.

Rather excited about her visit and eager to let Antonio take part of my mother's love for me I was happy with his presence. However, my mother spoke no French and Antonio no German and neither one of us spoke a fluent enough English to make it a nice get together.

Unfortunately my mother felt left out and got the impression that I did not love her. Furthermore, since I was in charge of almost everything in Charlie's factory I was reluctant to take time off, thinking that my mother could explore New York on her own, while we had the evenings together for which I had arranged many things to do.

Suddenly Antonio got sick which worried me and I went to see him in the morning before going to work and also tried to see him at night.

My mother thought she was being neglected and left to be with my cousin in South Dakota although she probably had calculated a much longer stay with me.

Actually I had hoped she would come to live here, but she claimed not to like America for, as she expressed it: "everyone seemed to have a dollar written on the face". She soon returned to England. The day my mother left I found Antonio's room empty with bloodspots everywhere and was told that someone had brought him to a hospital, but did not know which one.

Panicked, I got a taxi, whose driver truly helped me, and I found Antonio. There was something wrong with his lungs but I do not remember the diagnosis. After a few days he was discharged and told to eat good food and find attentive care. Needless to say, I took him home with me.

Thus, in 1947 we began life together with my meager salary, no family or furniture, yet we soon had a few nice friends. Antonio attended the daily lectures of the famous ophthalmologist with whom he had become friend and who had given him permission to audit. I went as manager to Charlie's factory.

To remain legally in the States, Antonio's only possibility at this point was to change his tourist visa into a student one, although he had no money to do so nor would it actually legalize his status. So we worried but were happy to have found each other.

By coincidence Antonio met a student in Anthropology who introduced him to a couple who were sponsored by the Viking Foundation to study the Indians in California. Being a physician and having lived in Africa, they were rather keen of having Antonio coming along with them. After Antonio agreed, he filled out the requested forms in which he stated his interest to go for a Ph.D. in Anthropology. In the summer that Antonio left with this group, my cousin invited me to join her to go by car to California, where her husband wanted to visit his sisters. For me this was a magnificent opportunity not only to see the country but also to meet Antonio there.

When Antonio returned again he had a shoebox filled with cards containing the various data he had collected. Theoretically he was now a student entitled to nine credits from Syracuse University but only, if he were to submit a paper about his experience with the Indians.

However, writing the paper about the Indians frustrated him so that one rainy evening he took the shoebox with all the data and threw it out the window. Pretending that this was an accident, I rushed down soliciting everyone in sight to help me collecting the many cards.

After this I promised to help him in whatever language he chose. Since I had taken some lessons in Portuguese, we finally succeeded in finishing it which entitled him to receive the nine credits from Syracuse University.

However, for the Immigration Department he had to legalize his status by being a registered student at a University in New York, for which he needed some money. With the understanding to return it one day (he did), I supplied him with the necessary cash. Together with the credit for his MD, he was now a legal student at Columbia University.

Somewhat later Antonio had the idea to submit this paper to the chairman of his department who was so enthusiastic about it that he recommended it to the Ford Foundation who gave him a scholarship of \$ 2.500.

When I realized that my life with Antonio had replaced my interest in music, I dreamed to close three grands. Indeed, I had stopped practicing for lack of time. In Paris, when I abandoned the piano the first time I thought that my career as a musician was hopeless, although I contemplated that perhaps I would go back some day. Now, that I gave it up the second time it was without any regret, for my happiness with Antonio seemed to fulfill me. However, Charlie's place had changed considerably due to war conditions. Charlie had to move to a much smaller place where we made mostly wedding dresses and hostess gowns, although recently evening gowns began to sell again.

Being a Jewish refugee and having lived in Paris I had become rather popular with Charlie's customers as well as with the Cuban dressmakers. We were like a large family. Although it was hard work for me I loved being in the middle of it all. Many buyers thought that if Charlie were to retire I would take over, an idea Charlie profoundly resented.

Since my father had educated me rather consciously about the value of money, I tried to save whenever I had a chance. Thus, with the additional

\$500.- Charlie gave me after each trip abroad my savings bank book indicated \$4.000.-

Proudly I informed Charlie about this for I thought it would please him. However, it did not take long when he claimed to need this money and - without any question I turned it over to him since I owed him my life.

About a year later - in 1948 - when I finally had the opportunity to go to Canada to reenter as a legal immigrant I went to see some of my husband's relatives. When they bombarded me with questions about my past as well as my present existence I was only too happy to answer, for I had been rather fond of them. When I spoke about the \$4.000.- which I returned to Charlie, they insisted that I should get the money back from him. But, being rather anxious of losing Charlie altogether I asked their advice which they were only too glad to supply. Comforted by their attitude, I did eventually succeed in getting it back from Charlie.

With my salary and Antonio's scholarship we had a modest lifestyle for the time being. Nevertheless, the nightmare that my relationship with Charlie would break and Antonio's scholarship money would dwindle accompanied our life like a dark cloud.

Similar to my encounter with Joseph Schwarz dictating his composition to me, music entered my life again when a bachelor with a piano moved into our building. Obviously our landlady told him about my background, so he asked me one day if I could give him some lessons, to which I consented. Since I was in need of money and music reconnected me with the past, I enjoyed this time with him and we became friends. He admitted that he was thinking of prolonging his life by making music, but since he was a chain smoker, he died of lung cancer after a few years.

It was fourteen years now that I had lived uprooted without family in furnished rooms, forever searching for emotional support. Though Antonio and Charlie were the best friends I could wish for, I felt in constant tension to please both of them. Terror overwhelmed me when fixed appointments were not kept, throwing me into an abyss of depression. The calenders of those years are filled with entertainments, but the diary I wrote in those years shows a sorrowful existence.

Although Antonio had now a legal status as a student, he hated to study anthropology and remained deeply worried about his future.

Moreover, his sister wrote about his wife's unfaithfulness, contemplating divorce procedures.

When war conditions obliged me to accept Charlie's offer to come to the States it was my firm intention to return to Europe once the nightmare was over.

Actually I thought that I might find a manufacturer (someone like Charlie) who would need a representative in Paris, so that I would have a steady salary in dollars. Although I might have been able to do so, the doors were locked for I did not have any legal travel documents. Thus, the most important issue was to legalize my status, for which I had to face the problems of my marriage since immigration without the spouse was illegal.

However, when I previously proposed that my husband come to America, he answered negatively. Thus, when I received his letter a few years later asking for a divorce, it did not really surprise me. Our marriage had been a long chain of disappointments in the recent past. Nevertheless, it felt somewhat strange to become entirely disconnected - like cutting the "umbilical cord." My lawyer welcomed my husband's decision, for it facilitated his efforts to legalize my status.

In 1949 life appeared settled. The war was over and I had successfully received my First Papers. My job as manager in Charlie's factory made me believe I was independent, assuming that I could find a similar job should I ever have to leave him (which turned out to be an illusion). On the other hand, Antonio's doubtful possibility of remaining in the States - which my lawyer labelled as "hopeless" his goals to have a house and a car, were irrelevant to me.

Furthermore, I became increasingly preoccupied about going on 40 now, particularly so since my marriage as well as music seemed to have definitely vanished from my life. Great support were my mother's letters full of love and understanding, Antonio's profound dedication and my popularity at Charlie's factory. But Antonio had already received his divorce papers while there seemed to be no end to mine, for all documents required official translations.

Meanwhile I began to have strong rheumatic pains in my upper left thigh which I tried to control with aspirin - but they persisted.

When my mother^{mailed} me some money for my birthday we used it to travel in a sleeping car to the Gulf of Mexico where we expected to have a wonderful time together.

However, we continued to worry about Antonio's status of remaining in the States, the fear of separation and these pains in my thigh. We both had a feeling of sinking, a sort of apprehension about something inevitable neither of us wanted or knew how to avoid.

Although I consulted different doctors, no one seemed to have a clear diagnosis. However, since my gynecologist stated that I had some fibroids, my doctor thought that these fibroids might be pressing on the sciatic nerves causing this pain. Thus, after many months of suffering I entered My. Sinai Hospital in 1950 on New Year's Day to have the fibroids removed.

The operation was not a complicated one, except during the recovery period I had a brush with death. I learned this when the night nurse told me with an alarmed expression on her face that I was "almost gone," but she just caught me in time. Nevertheless, I felt fine until the medication was reduced and the pain was back.

The gynecologist, convinced that the pain was connected with the spine, sent me an orthopaedist who suggested I wear a tight corset. But this felt worse than torture so I had to continue coping with my affliction.

My relatives came to the hospital to pick me up to live with them, but deprived of my usual life with Antonio and enduring the growing pain I went home after a few days.

My doctor recommended a return to the orthopaedist who gave me injections in the spine which I tolerated a few times under tremendous stress, but it did not improve my condition. He then recommended to see a neurologist who suggested a milogram. The orthopaedist disagreed since he found me to be in poor shape and suggested I go to my mother in England.

While preparing my trip I continued working at Charlie's when suddenly an attack of fever with large streaks of pus in my throat brought me to another specialist who told me to have my tonsils out. Thus, I entered a different hospital where the procedure ended with an unexpected hemorrhage. Like a fountain my throat sputtered blood, almost blinding the doctor's glasses and coloring my white sheet entirely red. Since he was alone he ran out of cotton pads while the anesthetic wore off, but he finished the job. I had lost six pounds in one day and could not speak for a week.

It was four years now that Antonio and I had lived together, so my trip to Europe presented our first separation. However, the excitement of going back home was overriding everything else. Although I met my mother in New York it was the first time that I saw our formerly luxurious apartment reduced to my mother's present place. Out of four pianos we had, there was only one with some furniture pieces from our music room. Since she had no table we ate at her precious lemon wood writing desk where she had placed some curtainlike pieces covering the shelves originally made for stationery. It was a sad sight. She still slept with my father's bathrobe under her bedsheet and she wore the same clothes. For her it must have been rather painful to see me so skinny, constantly taking pills. But I was happy, although frequently I asked myself how I could be so contented in spite of so much pain. Nevertheless, I blocked the pain with medication, while awaiting the visit to a specialist in Oxford whom the British Government had awarded a medal for treating war veterans with spinal problems. Yet, in my case he recommended learning to live with this pain.

Then he spoke about the Indians training themselves not to feel anything while sticking nails into their arms - which was no consolation for me.

My sister arrived from Israel to see me and I was so happy being back in Europe that I found the strength to attend an organ concert in York's beautiful cathedral, went to Harrogate and London. Later I flew to Geneva to join my friend Hedi in Lausanne who had arranged a room for me with a huge terrace overlooking the lake.

While in Lausanne I began to have violent attacks of diarrhea, fainting spells and frequent periods of paralysis. Nevertheless, almost daily I went somewhere to enjoy the unbelievable beauty of Switzerland my father loved so much.

Suddenly, out of the blue Charlie cabled:

"Undergoing emergency operation, suggest you cut short your vacation."

With my relative's help in England, I managed to be at Charlie's bedside within twenty four hours. Luckily his operation was successful and Charlie had a smooth recovery.

Once back in New York, I functioned in my former life as best I could. It was summer, I had enjoyed great happiness in England and now felt much better so I had no need to see a doctor.

But when Charlie came back in September the pains returned. In my need for warmth I bundled a heavy blanket around me whenever possible. Moreover, I now had a flannel sleeping bag in my bed, yet I had less pain sleeping on a wooden chair against the wall in an outlandish position or standing in the bathroom leaning against the sink. Since Antonio was under pressure to finish his Ph.D., he sometimes attempted to sleep in his own furnished room. But then, more often than not, he came any time at night exclaiming: "SURPRISE!!" - while we embraced each other crying together.

Although this happened almost an eternity ago, I still hear Antonio's desperate weeping alone while I tried to sleep standing in the bathroom. As a physician he must have known how deathly ill I was without being able to help me, and I could only struggle with these sometimes horrifying pains.

But it happened that suddenly I was OK again --- I never knew when or why the pain would hit me. Someone suggested a chiropractor but I was even worse off after each session and was obliged to discontinue.

The Cuban dressmakers, noticing my distress, blamed it on the cold weather. One of them(Aida) invited me to spend Xmas vacation at her home in Havana, an idea I welcomed with enthusiasm. Yes, perhaps a warm climate is "the solution."

Although going over some potholes during the bus ride to the airport made me cry out with pain, I remained optimistic. Aida's family tried to accomodate me in every way. Her father even made me a wooden board to sleep on - yet I was in utter misery. One of their friends suggested going to a place where they had special waters known to heal.

A physician I consulted doubted whether it would help me. After he examined me for almost an hour, he diagnosed my pain as a possible tumor in the spinal cord and proposed a milogram, something the neurologist wanted to do a year ago. Nevertheless, I left this family to travel to this place where I found a charming hotel.

Numb with pain and worry, I stood daily for hours on the terrasse overlooking a beautiful tropical garden. There was nothing to do except going to these baths which did not seem to help me. Now I was walking with a stick, often doubled up with pain, carefully avoiding any unevenness on the ground. Anticipating a nice party for New Year's eve, I dressed up but fainted and missed it all.

Although far away, Antonio felt my distress, writing me an urgent letter to come home. Once in New York again I phoned the orthopedist recommended by my gynecologist's secretary, but had to wait a week to see him which to me seemed to be an eternity. I was in shambles, at times screaming with pain when it felt like scissors cutting through my spine. When the orthopedist finally examined me he considered me to be an emergency case, but would only take me on if I could afford a private hospital room. With my insurance, and sure of Charlie's help, I agreed and the neurologist from the previous year performed the milogram. I had a tumor the size of a pigeon's egg between the fourth and the fifth column. Looking in the mirror after the milogram I hardly recognized myself. The effect of the unbelievably painful procedure was like a thousand needles in my brain forcing me for days to breath very fast. Antonio came with his books, left for lunch, and returned. That I survived these trying times I owe to his most wonderful love and care. Then came the operation lasting two and a half hours. Still unconscious from the anasthetics the surgeon excitedly tapped my shoulder shouting: "benign ---- you hear me---- benign!!"

I did not know what "benign" was, but from his voice I understood it was something good. Perhaps I should add that the neurologist charged me hardly anything for the milogram and the surgeon reduced his fee in half when I told him about my circumstances as a consequence of the war. Moreover, when I was discharged, he arranged a nurse for a reasonable price to help me in the morning while Antonio took over for everything else.

The orthopedist from the previous year came to apologize for his mistake. If he would have accepted the neurologist's advice to perform the milogram a year ago, he would have saved me not only a lot of expenses but an entire year of agony. So I lived again.....

After a recovery period of three months I returned to Charlie's factory. To my surprise he had hired a woman for the showroom under the pretense that it was too much for me. At the same time he emphasized that I should not be with his customers anymore but remain in the factory.

However, it did not take me long to see that he had given this person the privilege of knowing our safe combination. While checking her bank book I noticed that she recently deposited

relatively large sums of money. Moreover, it gave me a bitter taste to be forced out of the showroom and no longer talk to the buyers whom I knew so well. Of Italian background, married with two children, she was a bit plump, rather snappish and defiant. Her tendency was to show off, faking to the extent of promising clients delivery without foundation. When I reminded her that we didn't even have the material at hand, she brushed me off. Frequently she came in late or disappeared for hours. In fact, she behaved as if Charlie had replaced me with her.

Almost every morning Antonio told me that I cried in my sleep, "how much you must have loved this man..." Yes, it was love, but for me it was much more than that: Charlie was my "raison d'être." Being so much older and knowing his business, I had pledged myself to help this man until the end. That he would push me out of his life never occurred to me, and I was profoundly shocked to have lost not only his affection but more than anything else, the realization that he no longer needed nor wanted me.

The most traumatic experience was when I saw a gold pocket watch dangling on this woman's dress, a watch for which I had saved money over a very long time to give Charlie something special. It was an old fashioned watch with a short gold chain that I bought from an expensive Fifth Avenue store. For years Charlie wore it in his vest pocket, frequently fondling it with care. Now ten years later he must have given it to her and she had her own initials engraved. I paled.

With Charlie's almost daily insulting little gestures, a break seemed increasingly on the rise. In one of the succeeding nights I dreamed of taking our cutter's huge scissors to stab this woman for good.

I knew then that I had to leave soon. Finally Charlie blackmailed me by offering to pay for a trip to Israel if I were to leave. The last time I left Charlie's building, I felt as if I were entering "a tunnel."

Thus, another life began. While remembering my past-childhood in Breslau with all its trimmings, Paris with a husband as an uprooted refugee, the exhilaration of finding Charlie whom I considered the most trustworthy person, Gurs, the concentration camp with its anxieties, the arrival in New York, the loving years with

Antonio, the incredible pains and three operations and now being thrown out by the very person I thought I could trust ---- I felt as if I had come to the end of my life. Yet, I had to face a future, however uncertain.

T H E S P L I T :

While still recovering from years of pain, three operations, and drugs, the separation from Charlie added another immense sadness in my life.

When we met in Paris enjoying good times together Charlie felt young and, after successfully bringing me to the States he was delighted to show me his America. But being married with a son he did not seem to understand my loneliness, which led me to casual dating, tranquilizers and alcohol.

Without a telephone and with only a little AM radio in my furnished room, I dreaded the long weekends and holidays with nothing to do.

Thus, when I met Antonio I was intensely happy to end five years of being alone. Since Charlie was a father figure for me I never thought that he would be deeply offended by my having a lover. Lacking the understanding for his changed behavior, I blamed his infatuation for the new woman he had hired by demonstrating his ability to replace me. Little did he foresee that this woman's lies to customers, her inability to speak Spanish to our Cuban dressmakers, her inefficiency and selfishness would bankrupt him.

A few years later someone told me that he died in the South while living with his wife's family who he hated and owning nothing but a wristwatch.

Since Charlie obliged me to leave by offering to pay for a trip to Israel I felt rather uneasy about my future without him. Moreover, there were also some changes in my relationship with Antonio for which I had no explanation except that perhaps my long illness had something to do with it. Although I was excited to see my sister and her family, leaving Antonio preoccupied me. I hoped that a longer separation might re-establish our former intimacy. Since Antonio wanted me to meet his sister, he suggested making a stopover in Lisbon where she lived with her rather wealthy husband in a beautiful mansion.

However, I felt there to be entirely out of place since they had not the slightest understanding of my situation. So I left for Israel sooner than I expected. Furthermore, she disappointed Antonio by writing that she did not find me a suitable companion for him. Somehow she did not seem to realize that I had supported Antonio for years and that without my help he would never have made his Ph.D. at Columbia University. Considering her financial situation, her short cables and ten dollars for his birthdays were an insult. Antonio suffered with her coldness.

Being with my sister in Israel was an exhilarating experience. Although I had been familiar with the land's "miracle" through pictures and articles in the papers, seeing it gave me a formerly unknown pride and an immense satisfaction.

Food and money were scarce in those days and my sister moaned with the difficulties of making ends meet. Nevertheless, due to my brother in law's official position, we had a most wonderful time with invitations to parties of the various embassies, roaming the country by car, seeing nice people and playing chamber music together. But the fear about my uncertain future without Charlie weighed heavily on my mind.

However, the benefits of the unemployment insurance, my familiarity with New York and the English language, as well as Antonio's frequent letters contributed to my decision to return to the States.

After being with my sister for many weeks in which I collected samples from some manufacturers for sale in New York, I went to my mother in Leeds where we had a lovely time together.

Through my relatives in London I met Arthur, the president and owner of a famous pen and pencil manufacturer to whom I went for advice.

Although it was only a poorly paid part time job he offered me an opportunity to do some market research for him in New York. Since it was an impressive title and gave me the illusion that it might lead to something better, I accepted his suggestion.

Antonio was disappointed with my reports, thinking that after such a long time being away and with all kinds of people I had found nothing worthwhile.

Nevertheless, I was glad to have this connection with Arthur's business since it was precisely in those emotionally draining years that I had found a certain satisfaction in buying samples for him in different stores, visiting exhibitions, scanning professional journals in the library and having a business correspondence to attend. Arthur also came to New York occasionally, always inviting me for dinners in wonderful restaurants, trying to help me with advice and giving me a good time.

Soon his brother, a toy ballon manufacturer, joined my service, and there was also a distant relative in Australia for whom I looked around in "blister" packaging. Thus, my freelance activities kept me busy and stimulated.

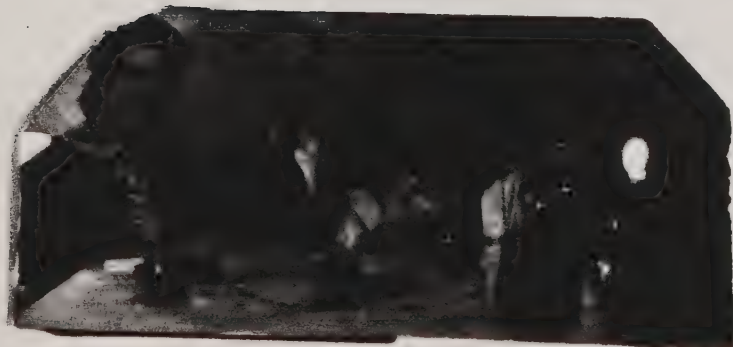
In my drive for independence my first decision was to find a place to live and my Lion (as I called him now, since he was born in August) seemed relieved that I wanted to leave the luxury hotel so soon.

Thus, we drove around different neighborhoods looking for something, when we happened to come to a narrow street with little houses which delighted me. "There is a tree," I exclaimed from a distance - "let's go to the tree."

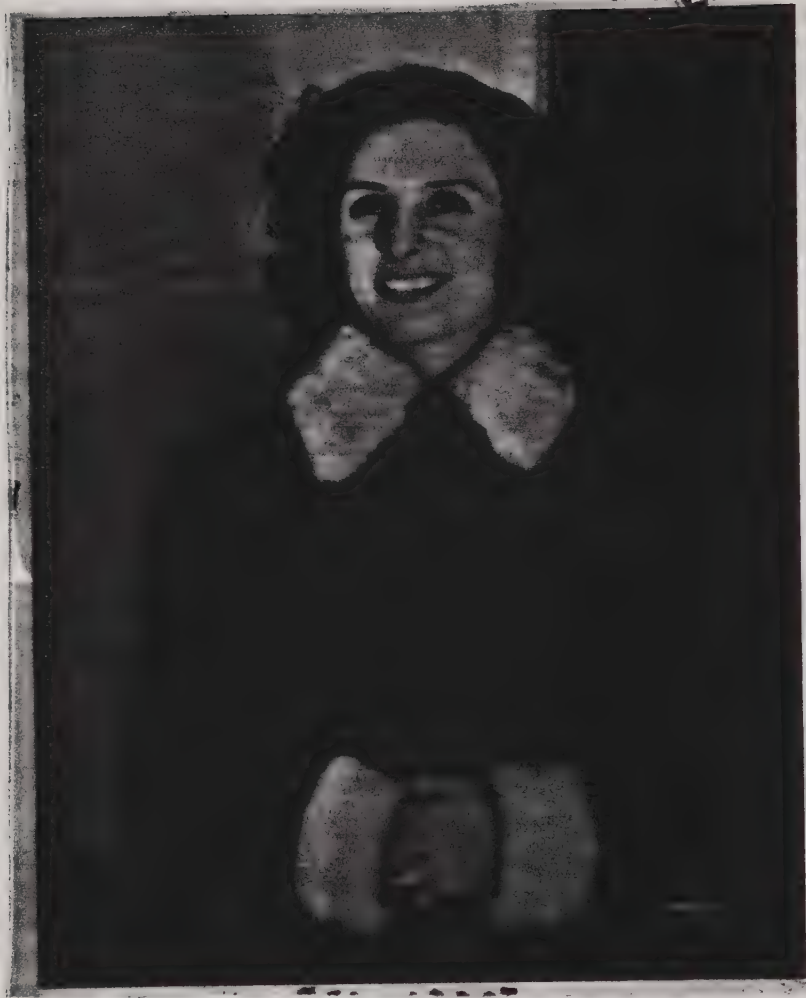
Indeed the tree stood in front of a small residential hotel where I was to live for many years. The house belonged to the brother of a young Jewish woman who was in charge of it. There were carpeted stairs reminding me of the small place I had in Paris near the Madeleine and I got a pleasantly furnished room with a pretty bathroom and a kitchenette which was everything I could wish.

But, for all these positive developments, I felt a bit dizzy with so many drastic changes.

After all, I had spent three months in a concentration camp in the Pyrenees with 8.000 women - then relative freedom on the fabulous Côte d'Azur, followed by three weeks on a Spanish ship in the company of many young men!



dinner at 29 West 12th St.
with my cousin Ilse and
her husband



Convinced of Charlie's negative attitude, I had applied directly to the unemployment office. However, studying the Times did not provide a large selection of positions for me and I usually ended up with some short unsatisfactory jobs.

In the meantime Antonio had found a job with "Voice of America" where he spoke in his mother tongue to the people in Portugal about Health Problems. But he wanted to go into the psychiatric field to combine his medical background with his recent anthropological studies. By coincidence, my husband's cousin who was formerly a neurologist in Berlin and now director of a Mental Institution near Boston came to New York. He was delighted to have Antonio on his staff. Unfortunately, this meant a separation for us, since under the circumstances I could not possibly join him. Although it was expensive we met frequently which was always an event for both of us, but our daily life was difficult. Antonio working in a Mental Institution full of misery, restrictions, poor food, roaches and rats with little pay was no paradise.

And I was alone again trying to remain optimistic despite hours of hopelessness.

However, I was content with Antonio's love letters, my mother's concern, some friends and occasionally a job besides working for Arthur in England.

With no one to advise me it took some time to realize that an interview and a contract were mandatory for all employment agencies. Thus, I ended up being listed with 28 agencies and taking a subscription of the Times. Every morning I classified the various ads where I would have to go, to call, or to write.

One day a woman I called for a job talked me into "being a manager in training for some very nice people, who would appreciate greatly if I were to consider working for them."

Having wandered around desperately for more than a year, I consented to try.

The pay was bad and the time rather odd: from 9-6, the next day from 1-10 pm and every other weekend paid with time and a half.

It was BARTON's CANDY with a factory in Brooklyn and 75 attractive stores, all air conditioned.

They had a union with a pension plan and medical care. Being orthodox Jews all stores closed on Shabbath time and the Jewish holidays. It was not something I expected, but I found new

friends, and the schedule permitted me to continue working for Arthur and earn additional income. But the job also meant making some difficult adjustments. Having been exposed to problems and tragedies, I needed a great deal of patience to deal with those who could not decide which ten cent bar they would like to eat at that moment.

Nevertheless, I settled gradually, perhaps because Antonio continued telling me that this was only a transition, encouraging me to plan a future. Thus, I decided on three wishes: to visit my mother in England, a furcoat, and a piano.

It was intolerable loneliness, not love for music, motivating me to consider playing the piano again. Another thought was the possibility of supplementing my meager income by giving piano lessons.

Being cut off from Charlie and Antonio by moving to Boston scared me, but when I had three raises in six months I felt more optimistic.

The people working at BARTON'S were an extraordinary mixture of nationalities and mentalities.

Since BARTON'S had the reputation of using unskilled labor, many workers provided long excuses why they had to work there.

Although most of us were only too happy to have a job, we felt humiliated. For me, with a professional degree as a piano teacher, speaking four languages fluently and having learned a trade by working in Charlie's factory, being "réduced" to a salesgirl in a candy store was particularly distressing. Moreover, I felt rather disturbed about not having found something more suitable for my future, although Antonio constantly reminded me of my past successes and insisted that BARTON'S was only a transient situation. By working overtime and sometimes helping the window dresser, eventually doing them by myself, I increased my salary. Furthermore, working at BARTON'S offered a rather large variety of unusual situations: the strict Shabbath closing of all 75 stores, the "hysterical" crying of women when told to work in another store, the shocks when we forgot to lower the awning and the sun melted our candy in the window.

Another time a pidgeon flying helplessly in the window display gathering the Broadway crowd on a Sunday afternoon, a dog with diarrhea walking through the entire length of the store on a Saturday evening, the many holdups.....

Once I was locked with another girl in a tiny toilet after a fellow forced me to open the safe while sticking a knife in my back - the excitement of the owner announcing the idea of a chocolate greeting card by admitting to have succeeded his dream of a ten million dollar business. Since we contributed to his success he thought of giving us a silver dollar as a special present. While stressing it as a symbol, he implored us not to spend but to save it with his wish for good luck.

The short man carried a heavy sack of coins around so we could pick our own individually. Since the majority felt one dollar to be an insult, I heard no one saying "thank you." However, I accepted his suggestion and kept it as a sign for a better future - and so it was.....

Despite my imagination of being degraded to a salesgirl, I also frequently had the strange impression of a "home coming."

Perhaps it was because this was the first time I had worked for Jewish people and being touched by the constant presence of Jewish law such as closing on time for Shabbath, all Jewish holidays, gifts and boxes decorated with the star of David and the coding of their merchandise with "GOD HELP US," to signify their strong belief. Thus, all working there had to keep these letters constantly in mind since we had to watch the freshness of our candy.

Particularly pleasant was the owner's trust in us. Once in while, someone would appear "to make the register" or a kind of supervisor making suggestions for display. We had to punch the clock and watch each other with the usual fights. But the schedule was adjusted so that few of us were steadily together and if the situation become intolerable, we had the chance to ask for transfer. The manager was responsible for the inventory and the ordering, the others for cleaning, display and selling, but more or less we all shared in what we had to do.

Suddenly someone offered Antonio a job in Argentina which delighted him, since this seemed to be a solution for his perennial nightmare: escaping the FBI's persecution by leaving the United States.

Although initially he was able to change his visitor visa into a student one, it expired when he achieved his Ph.D. Giving speeches about "GOOD HEALTH" on "Voice of America" and now working in a Mental Institution made the Immigration Department somewhat lenient.

Nevertheless, Antonio continued having profound anxieties about being expelled, which would oblige him to return to his job in the African Jungle.

Although I was soon to become a citizen, I did not have my divorce. Antonio had gotten his divorce some time ago.

After accepting another position in Worcester, Antonio returned from Boston during Christmas 1954. For New Year's eve we were invited to friends. It was a pleasant party, but being intensely disturbed about Antonio's plan to leave for Argentina, I retired to another room to relieve my sadness in abandoned weeping which Antonio could not share.

Although we did not live together yet, he was the man with whom I shared eight years of the most intimate bond I had ever known and to whom I still felt close.

Influenced by my brother in law's negative response to go to Argentina, Antonio decided not to accept this proposition.

Nevertheless, his deep fear of being expelled finally drove him to such a panic that he suddenly married to provide him with American citizenship. This he communicated to me over a long distance phone call.

Fortunately, I was being visited by a friend who intuitively felt that this phone call must have seriously wounded me, especially since Antonio immediately called back several times to which I did not respond.

In reaction to my silence, Antonio wrote a desperate letter in which he tried to assure me of his "eternal love...that the entire tragedy was the result of his state of mind, suffering atrociously and experiencing a formidable panic which threw him blindly into this adventure....."

Albert Schweitzer said: "Every end constitutes another beginning," but this beginning was a life I did not wish to live.

I felt a complete void in which everything had lost its meaning, only mirroring my ineptitude at being of value to anyone. Thus, I became careless about my appearance, lost weight, smoked and drank more while taking an endless amount of tranquillizers. Although I had some nice friends, I had lost interest. A streak of white hair had grown and with my skinny body and eyes dilated from pills and sadness I was frequently the center of curiosity among my co-workers. Gradually I confided to one or the other, and since my tragedy resembled their own, most were nice to me.

Six months had passed when I suddenly noticed Antonio standing in front of the store where I worked, causing my mind to go blank.

....."Go ... you have a headache and dont worry....." my co-worker blurted out, and so I joined Antonio. Without saying much while we walked along Fifth Avenue, eventually sitting opposite each other in a restaurant with a bottle of wine between us.

"Yes" he admitted"I felt compelled to marry so I could remain in the States," begging me to understand that he continued to love me.

While noticing my sloppy clothes he felt my despair, pleading with me to take care of myself. Although profoundly troubled, I had to realize that the years had changed us. When we first met we fitted together, but now Antonio was a free man in good health with an MD and a Ph.D., while I was still married, had lost my well-paying job, and was stigmatized by a severe illness of which the consequences were not known.

Some years ago, Antonio had bought me a gold wedding band from Cartier consisting of three rings forming a rose, implying three phases of a relationship ----- perhaps this was one of them.

It was the spring of 1956 and, since Antonio had shared my expenses for a furcoat before he married, I had reached one of my three wishes and now planned to visit my mother in England. With the help of my uncle I had started buying some stocks which were paying dividends. Moreover, since Arthur recommended me to his brother, a manufacturer of toy balloons, my salary doubled.

Antonio mailed me some money at times and frequently wrote, which helped me to believe that he still loved me.

In addition to working at BARTON'S many weeks_ between fifty and sixty hours and looking around for Arthur, I was searching for a second hand upright. Realizing that my home had vanished entirely, my marriage ending in a divorce, my trust in Charlie shattered and now Antonio married to someone else, I felt as if life had come to an end for me.

Faced with these facts I hoped for support from my mother, thinking that perhaps music besides my jobs might be a more peaceful existence. Thus, in the summer of 1956 I went to my mother in Leeds and visited other family members in London.

My mother (a pianist) agreed that playing the piano again might be a good idea, but not professionally since I had lost too many years of training. However, some disagreed, particularly a cousin of mine who was a lawyer and knew, that I was entitled to get money from the German Government since the war had prevented me from finishing my studies and becoming a professional musician.

He was willing to take my case, but needed a certificate of attendance from a music school. This was great news for me and, with the help of friends, I succeeded and mailed it to him.

On my return to New York I also followed my mother's wish to call her "most beloved sister" Gretel's son. He told me that his brother Jullu was here, whom I had not seen in more than twenty years. Remembering him as a particularly nice man, I was eager to see him, and so the next evening we all met. We had a wonderful time together celebrating our survival of the war.

For next summer's vacation Jullu invited me to come to Milwaukee which I was only too glad to accept. A few weeks later I found a second hand upright. But since my landlady did not permit me to have a piano I had the problem of finding another place which took a long time. However, since I had paid the dealer the full price in cash he agreed to keep the piano in storage.

Leaving the pretty tree lined 12th street where I had lived for sixteen years was difficult. The environment of the French

University, Fifth Avenue and a nice church across the street were particularly pleasant, - and I missed the atmosphere of Greenwich Village with its attractive stores, coffee and movie houses.

Now I lived in an old furnished rooming house on West 76th street where I had to shop on Columbus Avenue in the midst of buildings I hated. My cousin Jullu wrote often during the year reminding me of my promise to join his family in the summer.

Thus, in July 1957 I went to Milwaukee where I met his eighteen year old daughter who, to my amazement , looked exactly like her grandmother-- my mother's "most beloved sister" Gretel.

As if he were my father, Jullu asked about my past, present, and future plans for my life, to which I truthfully answered that I didn't know what to do with myself. To my delight Jullu proposed to go with me to a Vocational Guidance Center. After filling out a questionnaire, I had an interview with a man who claimed that I had a "profound neurosis" and suggested going back to music as a profession.

This felt like a bombshell, but also presented

the overwhelming task of how to go about it... except perhaps by getting some training as a piano teacher. Although I lacked the confidence that this would give me sufficient income, I considered following his advice. Once back in New York, a musician friend recommended someone who was specialized in coaching professionals. To my surprise, he accepted me as his student for he thought me to be "very musical." The charge for the lesson was (for me) the enormous sum of \$25.- but I decided to "invest in myself" as Antonio used to say.

Some weeks later a young man approached me in the street offering his help to carry my groceries while asking if I were the one playing the piano. He lived with his friend a floor below me and said that they always turned off their TV to hear me playing. Soon we found common ground in our dislike for the landlady, and he invited me to their weekly "hate sessions." They were Australians working at the United Nations. Although rather young, a close friendship developed between us lasting to this day.

For the project of upgrading the West Side our

landlady received money from the city and in January 1958 our neighborly living together came to an end since we all had to move out. Finding another apartment was a nightmare but then -----my luck turned and I found the place where I still live.

Since the expensive piano lessons did not seem to improve my playing and the prospect of being a piano teacher had lost its appeal, old frustrations and the uselessness of it all invaded me again, paralyzing my efforts.

One day, while sitting in a crowded cafeteria, I noticed a white haired man reading a paper on which I saw the headline:

"MUSIC FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN."

This idea fascinated me immediately and I asked him where I could buy the paper to read the article. After some talk the man seemed to sense my "stagnation" and supplied me with the address of a place where they might accept me as a volunteer in some musical capacity.

It was an elegant office on 57th street where I had to fill out a questionnaire. Although I had no actual experience I was assigned as a volunteer at the Manhattan State Hospital (a Mental Institution) where I was put in charge of the music department. Rather astonished with this task, I was assured that I only had to

play some records. But since their record collection was of poor quality, I went to the library and selected "Carmen" because I knew the story. I practiced my speeches at home aloud since I had never talked in public and I was anxious to please. Obviously the clients liked it, for every week more people came to my session. Furthermore, some wanted me to accompany their singing or get piano lessons.

John, a student of my teacher, asked me one day if he could try out a program for his concert. The people were delighted, suggesting that I play two piano pieces with him another time. Another student who specialized in improvisations was interested in the reaction among the inmates and also played a few times. However, the most astounding experience I had was with an elderly woman who had forgotten her name and did not speak for fifteen years. It was suggested that I give her piano lessons. She liked to go to church. So I gave her some easy Bach chorals while analyzing the polyphonic lines with the conclusion of the "Amen" cadence.. It took only a few weeks before the psychologist told me that the woman talked again and even remembered her name.-----

In December Antonio returned from Georgia where he had been an assistant professor but now preferred to find something in the New York vicinity. Although I still loved him, my interests had shifted and his marriage had left me bruised. Nevertheless, we were happy to see each other again.

Even working at BARTON'S I gradually began to feel somewhat out of place, as if I did not belong there. Being so much with my Australian friends, musical gatherings, playing the piano, working in a Mental Institution as well as the research for English manufacturers, seemed to alienate me from the usual crowd. Their apparently growing hostility resulted in my accelerated search for a school where I might become a professional musician.

One day I slipped from a ladder in the store, bruising my legs which turned them a dark blue. Since the doctor told me to stay home the manager had to readjust the schedule, which did not please her. BY coincidence I picked up the phone immediately again to make another call, when incidentally she did the same and I overheard her report about me to the main office. After working there for years she accused me of unbelievable wrong doings and wanted me to get fired.

Compelled by my anger, I overcame my previous reluctance and called the Julliard School of Music.

Luckily the person on the phone understood my problem and advised me to get in touch with the chairman of the Music Department at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Within less than a half hour I had an appointment with him.

His pleasant appearance and obvious interest in my previous musical training seemed to impress him. Since education played a significant role in our family, I always felt either ridiculed or rebuffed when looking for work. No one seemed to recognize that my former studies were interrupted by the war, forcing me to adjust to a different lifestyle.

Thus, it was like a beam of light to speak to this man who appreciated my past achievements. After years of trying to live in this apparently lawless world, I did not dare to believe that I may have found my path back "home.... to music." Although making a living with music seemed rather distant, I began to attend the weekly morning sessions at Teacher's College in February 1960. Therefore, I cancelled my activity at the Mental Institution and arranged working at BARTON'S from 3:00 p.m. to midnight, but continued my piano lessons and the research for the manufacturers in England.

The people in this course were mostly piano teachers who were interested in the different

approach for which this course was well known. As if it were an entertainment, I listened with growing pleasure. However, when my carefully prepared term paper was returned without a grade, I felt hurt to be told that I had been taking this course as an audition and not for credit.

Being unfamiliar with this vocabulary, I decided to change my status. After scrutinizing my application with the idea of teaching music to handicapped children the registrar suggested making a list of my past experiences. To the surprise of everyone, Teacher's College accepted me as an undergraduate student with 69 point credit for life experience.

Encouraged by my cousin (and lawyer) that I would receive my restitution money in the near future, I was looking for a dealer who would take my upright as partial payment of a grand. When it actually happened, the dealer spoke of an unusual opportunity, but wanted the money within 24 hours. Luckily, a cousin provided the sum, and to

my great excitement, I came into the possession of a most beautiful Steinway grand in oriental mahogany in February 1960.

The shock was so overwhelming that it took me days before I dared just playing it.

Three years ago when I went to see my cousin Jullu I encountered a professor of mathematics while visiting a museum in Chicago. In the succeeding years we met a few times and maintained a correspondence.

At the time I became a part time student, I again saw him. He considered my efforts a waste of time for he felt that it would take too many years to complete a degree. However, I was afraid of studying full time, for this meant leaving my job. He advised me to have some savings before taking on full time studies and suggested the possibility of obtaining a scholarship.

But I postponed any decision until I had a chance to discuss this with my family in England.

Surprisingly, the solution came with the visit of a friend who specialized in economics. He proposed that I apply for a collateral loan from a Bank-- a new idea which relieved my anxiety since my

savings were invested in stock certificates which the Bank accepted against the loan. In any case it was a daring enterprise to invest everything I possessed into one year of study. Utterly alone in the world, I gambled to reach a different platform where I might be able to have a lifestyle similar to the one I grew up in. Thus, in February of 1961 with English as my fourth language and a rather uncertain future, I began my studies at Teachers College, Columbia University as a full time student. With the money from the loan and having obtained a scholarship from the ~~Blk~~ ^Foundation I calculated that I now had enough money to complete the 59 credits for a Bachelor in one year without fully realizing the difficulty of undertaking this task. Nevertheless, I was optimistic, believing that if all goes wrong I could return to my job at Barton's Candy. Thus, seven years had passed since I started as a "manager in training" for 75 cents an hour. At that time I had made three wishes: seeing my mother in England, getting a fur coat and return to music.

Although excited to be a Columbia student, I missed going to Barton's; for it had always been an escape from depressions on lonely weekends. Suddenly, I found myself not only alone, but also entirely overcome with problems, I had never imagined. The situation reminded me of the time when I had left Charlie's factory, obliged to collect unemployment insurance and hunting for a job. None of the dressmakers would ever call me, although we worked together for more than ten years.

The other surprise came from my piano teacher who refused to continue my lessons claiming to have a different philosophy than that of Teacher's College.

Furthermore, when I saw my mathematic friend again he told me that this time he came with his "new wife." Since I was sufficiently infatuated the shock resulted in continuous violent bleeding. My condition brought me to a gynecologist, who not only restored my health, but with his extraordinary capacity for empathy helped me to overcome my distress. After my hospitalization under the magnificent care of this man Teacher's

College seemed to be more familiar territory and the tests appeared easier.

One day, while waiting in an office a secretary began a conversation when I mentioned my interest in music for handicapped children. She seemed familiar with the subject and encouraged me to write to Paul Nordoff, a famous music therapist. Apparently my letter impressed him since he came to my apartment to talk to me.

Moreover, he invited me to observe him at the hospital in Philadelphia which was a fascinating experience. When I told him that I was leaving for England he eagerly suggested a visit to the Sunfield Home near Birmingham where I would get acquainted with a team dedicated to the "Forgotten Children". With a Bplus average and a signed contract for my first teaching job, I left for London on a Columbia charter plane.

Usually I went to England to see my mother, but this time I also thought of investigating the possibility of living there again. It was more than twenty years ago, that I arrived in New York via Cuba in a rather slow moving vessel where I had a most wonderful time among mostly Spanish speaking people. Rather excited and immensely

happy to have escaped the war, confident of Charlie whom I trusted like a father, I discarded my previous nightmares and the sorrow of leaving Europe, since I was determined to return.

However, in 1941 my calculations were somewhat premature for the unexpected break with Charlie and my divorce had changed everything.

But now in 1962 with my certification as a special education teacher I hoped again to resettle in Europe. Although America gave me shelter and opportunity, I longed for being back among my own people. Profoundly bruised psychologically from all that had happened, I yearned for my mother, a familiar culture, mentality and environment.

Ten years ago when Charlie blackmailed me to accept money to go to Israel it seemed "natural" to establish myself there. However, although I was fond of my sister and loved Israel, I did not speak any Hebrew and felt alien in their culture. It was London with my mother, other family members and friends I wished to live more than anywhere else.

Yet, facing the reality of the expenses of moving, finding a job and a place to live I arrived at the rather painful conclusion, that to return had been a dream of long ago - in a time that seemed to have ceased to exist. However, by becoming an American citizen and having obtained certification as a special education teacher from a prestigious university I had established a stage from where I could develop my interest in music for disabled children.

While teaching full time, I began my studies for a masters degree in neurologically impaired children(received in 1966) and also pursued an Ed.M. in music education(received in 1973). I enjoyed my peaceful existence particularly when I was hired by United Cerebral Palsy as "Educational Director" for their headstart program in 1966.

My activities in music for handicapped children which I labelled "Musical Play Sessions", generated interest among staff members which led to research papers which were published in England and also led to the making of video tapes which were shown at International

Conferences which I attended.

Throughout the years my work at United Cerebral Palsy has taken on different forms due to changes in administration, growth within the agency and the type and number of children served.

At the present time I have twenty groups for my Musical Play Sessions. The children range from two and 20 years of age and, to help staff to integrate the contents of these sessions we have regular meetings scheduled. Moreover, I am involved in conveying new ideas for holidays and some parent meetings where special musical activities have to be carefully planned and organized.

As I look back, it seems strange that all of this interest in children began with a chance encounter in a cafeteria where I noticed a headline "Music for Handicapped Children". This idea fascinated me immediately and guided me for years to come.

All my love, dedication and energy I endured to find happiness with a man ended in desperation or a void. It is the smiles of these children to my piano playing, regardless of their age or the degree of their infliction which provides me with a continuous stream of satisfaction.

